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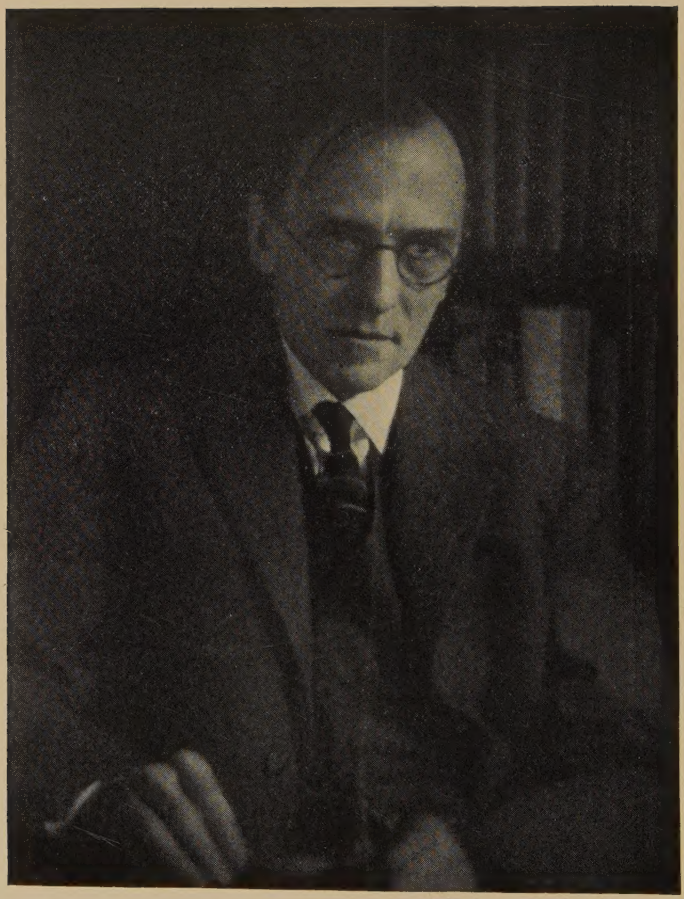
Life and Letters of

STUART P. SHERMAN



Photograph by Doris Ulmann

PORTRAIT OF STUART P. SHERMAN

Life and Letters of STUART P. SHERMAN

BY JACOB ZEITLIN
AND
HOMER WOODBRIDGE

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VOLUME I

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To

JOHN MEARS SHERMAN

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PREFACE

TO THE public at large Stuart Sherman is known as an active critic who during the greater part of his writing career defended conservative standards in literature and manners alongside of Mr. Paul Elmer More and Professor Irving Babbitt, and in opposition to the hosts led by Mr. Mencken, and then, in his later years, with a surprising and somewhat disconcerting suddenness deserted his friends and gave much comfort to his former antagonists without actually entering into an alliance with them. Those who approved of the change looked upon it as an honest conversion; the others imputed it to a craving for popularity. What neither side seemed to be aware of was that the latest manifestations of Sherman's mind and character were discernible from the beginning to those who had the opportunity of exchanging ideas with him intimately, and might even be traced in his writings by anyone who would follow him with attention. One may not find in him the consistency of an outlook early arrived at and rigorously maintained, but there is another kind of consistency which results when a man works to bring to fruition the vital powers with which nature has endowed him. A hostile critic would call it yielding to temperament; it might nevertheless lead to a richer realization of the possibilities of life. At any rate, the emotional conflicts and the intellectual hesitations which appear in Sherman's career make a study of his life peculiarly interesting, and indeed essential to an understanding of his critical development.

It may be too early to attempt an estimate of Sherman's definite place in American criticism, but there can be little question of his importance among contemporary critics and of the value of his work in a consideration of the literary currents of our time. His position is essentially a median one, between the conservative and the radical wings; more nearly central, perhaps, than that of any of his contemporaries. This was a result of his background, his training, and his tempera-

ment. He combined a New England inheritance and education with Western birth, breeding, and experience. He had submitted himself to a thorough classical discipline which had given him wide knowledge of the past and full understanding of the conservative point of view. Temperamentally he had the adventurous curiosity and the skepticism of a modern, along with an intense interest in his own time and a passionate desire to understand and interpret it. The comparative centrality of his position becomes obvious as soon as, with these points in mind, one compares him with some of his contemporaries—for example, Paul Elmer More, W. C. Brownell, Ludwig Lewisohn, or Van Wyck Brooks. He shifted his critical point of view, but his work from the beginning shows a combination and balance of qualities, not inharmonious with each other, though rarely found together: understanding of the past and sympathy with the present.

The fundamental trait of Sherman's criticism, underlying all his attitudes and principles, is a splendid gusto, a huge enjoyment of many kinds of literary excellence. In his first contribution to the *Nation* ("The Superlative in Criticism") he declares "exuberant joy in excellence, a joy that makes its possessors speak like intoxicated men," to be the first requisite of stimulating criticism. Along with this capacity for huge enjoyment Sherman had a trait not often associated with it—the power to make clear and sharp distinctions, to see, for instance, in a writer like George Meredith, whom he devotedly admired, a grievous lack of artistry, and to say finally of Henry James, a writer whom he had begun by detesting, "I discriminate, but I adore him." Mr. Johan Smertenko, in a review of *Shaping Men and Women*, points out this quality as central in Sherman's work, but he calls it "tolerance" and regards it as a weakness. "The one principle," he says, "which Sherman held consistently through his course as teacher and critic was his tolerant theory 'that patient search usually discovers some refreshing virtue wherever there has been exhibited any unusual display of energy.' This tolerance, admirable in the man, invalidated his work as a critic, so that even in the case of Mr. Mencken, where a healthy animosity to all that the writer was and stood for stamped his reaction, Sherman is incapable of complete condemnation." No higher compliment can be

paid to a critic than to say that he is incapable of *complete* condemnation even of a writer for whom he feels a healthy animosity.

Viewed in relation to the development of his ideas, Sherman's criticism displays three fairly distinct phases. In the first he appears as the avowed knight errant of humanism. "The beginning of effective authorship," he said in the Introduction to *On Contemporary Literature*, "is usually the adoption or the acceptance of a definite point of view." In that book, as in the *Matthew Arnold*, he adopted essentially the critical philosophy of Messrs. More and Babbitt, qualified by a democratic spirit of which his masters could not fully approve, but which was his special contribution to the "new humanism." Carrying the war into the enemy's country, he applied pungent and tonic criticism to various literary tendencies of the day—naturalism in its several manifestations, æstheticism, exoticism. The book popularized the humanistic view of literature, as its older champions had never been able to popularize it, by applying it brilliantly to such widely read authors as H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, and George Moore. Its effectiveness was enormously increased by the fact that the critic had obviously read his authors with deep interest, that he had felt their vitality and power, that even where he seemed most hostile to them he had been more or less unwillingly in sympathy with them. His controversial purpose led him to suppress such sympathies pretty completely in the essays on Wells, Dreiser, and Moore. Yet it is clear that he was impressed by the mass and vigor of Dreiser's novels, that he was strongly attracted by the buoyant optimism of Wells, that he almost succumbed to the charm of Moore.

But this first important book of Sherman's was something more than an assault on error. It dealt also with the critic's discovery of positive values, not only in writers with whom he was essentially in sympathy—Mark Twain, Arnold Bennett, George Meredith, and Shakespeare—but even in some like John Synge and Anatole France, whose intellectual tendencies disturbed him. In the treatment of some of his subjects in this book there is a foreshadowing of the later stages of his critical development. The essay on Henry James illustrates his faculty for getting inside the mind of an author to whom he was not

at first attracted, and looks forward to the work of his third period, as the essay on Mark Twain, with its interest in American democracy, looks forward to his second.

In this second phase he remains on the whole a good humanist, though he moves farther away from the aristocratic humanism of Mr. More. With his attention focussed by the war on the relation of literature to national ideals, he now appears as the interpreter and champion of the American tradition. The two books which embody the significant doctrine of this period are *Americans* and *The Genius of America*. The latter is a series of vigorous "tracts for the times," belonging on the whole more to social than to literary criticism. The splendid gallery of portraits in *Americans* is his great achievement of this period; perhaps it is the most substantial of all his books. The studies of Franklin, Emerson, Hawthorne, Whitman, Roosevelt, and the Adamses are done with rare penetration and balance. The "admirable riches of human nature," as he says in the Preface, are present in his subjects; his portrayal illustrates them with finely discriminating skill. There are few books better fitted to give to Americans an understanding of the values of the national inheritance. To open and close this volume there are essays on Mr. Mencken and Mr. More which serve to define Sherman's position. He is perhaps not equally far from the Nietzschean individualism of Mencken and the reactionary humanism of More, but he is now remote from both, and his position, as compared with either extreme, is central.

Though a definite doctrinal tendency pervades *Americans* and *The Genius of America*, there is sufficient evidence in both these books of that widening sympathy which his early allies were deploring as a symptom of relaxed standards. It is undeniable that Sherman's ideas were in flux. One need only consider the contents of *Points of View*, composed partly before and partly after *Americans* was issued as a book, and embracing an essay on Samuel Butler in the spirit of *On Contemporary Literature* along with sympathetic studies of W. C. Brownell and Brander Matthews, Sinclair Lewis and Booth Tarkington, George Sand and Benjamin Disraeli—though the sympathy with Disraeli is qualified. Among the essays in this volume is one which announces unmistakably the shift in Sherman's

critical position. "Forty and Upwards" is virtually a repudiation of his established "character" as a semi-official champion of conservative ideas. He gives voice to a desire to break with his past and to use his culture "in understanding, not judging, the whole of the human spectacle." The maxims which he frames for himself are those of an explorer in new realms of beauty and happiness: "Unfold, leaf by leaf. Become more and more intimate with life. . . . Study all lovely things, with docility seeking their principle of beauty. Consider whether it is better to change and be living than to be unchanged and dead. . . . Push on into untrodden forests, up unexplored valleys, seeking new springs of refreshment, crying at the foot of every mountain ridge, 'Let us see what is on the other side.'"

These sentences were written early in 1924. They express the mood which at the same time was taking shape in the Conversations which make up *My Dear Cornelia*, the most popular of all his books, though not likely to be among his most durable. Its semi-fictional form, its timeliness, and its emotional glow gained for it that wider circle of readers for which Sherman had begun to reach out. Was it a curious chance or a logical sequence of events that at this precise moment drew upon him the attention of a great metropolitan newspaper and provided him with a larger audience than he had ever dreamed of addressing? However this may be, his change of profession permitted him to pursue with much greater freedom than would have been possible under university restraints the objects of his new quest. The results are to be found in *Critical Woodcuts*, in *The Main Stream*, and in other essays, as yet uncollected, of the New York period. These articles appearing weekly in "Books," with their combination of learning, brilliance, and timeliness, were a new sort of thing in American criticism. They gave to American readers something comparable with the best journalistic criticism of England or France. Their form was conditioned, of course, by their immediate purpose. The size of his audience made it necessary that the papers should be shorter, less elaborate in structure, and more popular in style. Sherman was aiming to present a comprehensive view of tendencies in current literature, and hence he is much less rigorously selective in his choice of subjects. He could not entirely escape the danger (which he foresaw) of exaggerating

at times the importance of particular books and writers. His eagerly receptive mood laid him open to this temptation. But as he intimated in the preface to *Critical Woodcuts*, he by no means abdicated the function of judgment. The work of this period shows better than that of any other the full-blooded delight in all kinds of imaginative adventure, the fine gusto, which is the soul of his criticism. It is not too much to say that in this final phase of his writing Sherman gave us the most brilliant and satisfying picture we have of the pageant of contemporary letters in America.

That it is the final phase is only the result of tragic accident. Sherman's whole life suggests that the rôle of sympathetic and vivid chronicler could not have satisfied him indefinitely. The expansive and inductive mood of his last years would have led him to some new synthesis, to points of view from which he would have had a clearer vision of some phases of truth. As it was, cut off before he had reached what should have been mid-career, he left in the record of each stage of his journey a rich inheritance.

It is not alone his development as a critic that makes the story of Sherman's life interesting. There is also his profession of teaching which absorbed him as much as the business of writing, and to which he applied an attitude as critical and a standard as humane as he brought to the study of literature. And within and beyond all this is the interest of his personality, vivid, austere, playful, serious, tempery, suave, humorous, sardonic, gentle, severe, passionate, stoical, egotistic, generous, poetic, rational. The interplay of these traits in his character was baffling to those who knew him only slightly and at a distance, and even the most intimate could not pretend to read him as an open book. It is but to a limited extent that he communicates himself in his published work. Fortunately he has left behind him a large number of notebooks and journals in which moods and passing fancies as well as ideas are frequently set down. Moreover, Sherman belonged to what is probably the last generation of real letter writers who, using the more confidential medium of pen and ink, find it possible to express themselves more freely than through the naked clarity of a typing machine. To each of his correspondents, in accordance with the kind of relation in which he stands to them and with

the degree of sympathy, affection, or respect that he feels toward them, he reveals a different facet of his nature. There is a Sherman who writes high-spirited, somewhat irresponsible letters to his cronies, and there is quite another who writes words of good counsel and paternal interest to disciples and admirers. The tone of the letters to Paul Elmer More is spontaneous and cordial, whereas a note of ceremonious courtliness pervades his correspondence with W. C. Brownell. Differing from any of these is the Sherman who appears in the letters of simple and tender affection to his mother and son. Altogether there is here a rich body of personal material, which the writers regard as an ample justification of the size of their book.

The preparation of this biography was entrusted by Mrs. Sherman to the writers because of the nature and length of their acquaintance with Stuart Sherman. One of them was his closest friend in the years at Williamstown and Harvard, the other was a colleague in his seventeen years of teaching at the University of Illinois. The division of labor between them was determined by these circumstances. The years preceding Sherman's appointment at Illinois (chapters I to VIII) fell to the share of Homer Woodbridge, who also contributed largely to Chapter IX and the opening of Chapter XI; from that point to the end the story was carried on by Jacob Zeitlin. While the writers thus assume the chief responsibility for their respective sections they wish to make it clear that they have discussed each other's work in detail and subjected it to the most candid criticism in the interest of a harmonious interpretation, and that they are individually in accord with all the general judgments expressed in the book. They have, however, considered it their primary function not to offer a critical or analytic study of their subject, but to present in an orderly fashion the matter relevant to an understanding of his character and ideas, and to permit him, as much as possible, to speak for himself.

In their work the writers have been steadily dependent on the coöperation of Mrs. Stuart Sherman. Not only did she place at their service all the indispensable manuscript material, but she constantly supplied them with her recollections and assisted them with encouragement and advice at all times. The earlier chapters of this book would have had small interest without the

reminiscences of Stuart Sherman's mother and of his sisters, Mrs. Katherine Gilbert and Mrs. Persis Montgomery. Various friends—Mrs. Elizabeth Newton (formerly Mrs. Hubbs), Professor Wellington Aiken, Mr. Grosvenor B. Hill, Professor Harold Goddard, and others—contributed interesting and valuable reminiscences. To them and to all those who generously permitted the use of their letters from Stuart Sherman—Mr. Paul Elmer More, Carl and Irita Van Doren, Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, Mrs. W. C. Brownell, Miss Garreta Busey, Professor Irving Babbitt, Mr. V. V. McNitt, Mr. J. E. Spingarn, and many others—the writers owe a deep debt of gratitude. To Dr. Frank W. Scott the chapter on Dunewood owes much of its concrete detail. President A. S. Pease of Amherst cheerfully and repeatedly went to a great deal of trouble to supply desired and useful information. Mr. Howard Spohn of New York (at that time living in Chicago) courteously offered access to his extensive collection of clippings—a courtesy that was the more appreciated in that it did not have to be sought. Mr. Maxwell Perkins of Scribner's gave much assistance in the friendliest spirit whenever he was called on. The manuscript was read by Professor George F. Whicher, Miss Garreta Busey, Miss Ida Zeitlin, and Carl and Irita Van Doren. Their criticisms and suggestions were of great service in guiding the writers in the revision of their work. To Henry Holt and Company, Charles Scribner's Sons, and the Atlantic Monthly Press the writers wish to express their thanks for permission to quote from Sherman's books; and to Messrs. Boni and Liveright for permission to quote from Ludwig Lewisohn's *The Creative Life*.

H. E. W.
J. Z.

June 10, 1929.

Life and Letters of

STUART P. SHERMAN

CHAPTER I

GRANDSON OF NEW ENGLAND

STUART SHERMAN was a grandson and pupil of New England. Born in Iowa, he spent the significant years of his boyhood in California and took his first course in the university of life in a gold camp in Arizona. When he came to New England for his education he was in appearance and in character a true son of the West; and he returned to the Middle West to do the greater part of the work of his manhood. When at forty-two he removed to New York, he came, as he explains in an intensely characteristic essay,[1] "in order to change not my place but my profession. . . . I withdrew to the city only after I had completed one life in the provinces." Asked in the imaginary dialogue of that essay where he feels most at home, he lists a dozen places, ranging from Mount Greylock to San Diego. Good Westerner as he was, he kept many of the traits of his New England heritage, and he owed most of his formal education to New England schools and colleges. A curious symmetry, which can almost be expressed in a formula, marks the division of his life between East and West. Ancestry, New England; birth and boyhood, the West; education, New England; professional career, the Midwest; final work, New York. In short, he was an almost abnormally representative American.

One American trait, however, he rather conspicuously lacked: he had no particular interest in his ancestry. When he was about thirteen he took it into his head (fortunately for his biographers) to compose an autobiography. The only allusion in this to any progenitor more remote than his father and mother is as follows: "When I was eight months old my mother took my sister and me to the home of her parent in Vermont." In many years of intimate acquaintance the writer never heard him refer

[1] "Interview with a Newcomer in New York," *Scribner's Magazine*, November, 1925; reprinted in *Shaping Men and Women*.

to any earlier representatives of the family. When his friends were comparing notes as to ancestors he usually remained silent or made some comment flavored with good-humored irony. In 1910, however, when Frank Dempster Sherman, who was making an elaborate study of the Sherman genealogy, wrote to him for information, he showed some interest in the matter, which he attributed to the influence of his little son, and later sent to Mr. Sherman a small sum to aid his researches.

Stuart Sherman's blood was mainly English, with a slight infusion of Scotch and possibly of Cornish. Ancestors of the four families to which his grandparents belonged came to New England between 1633 and 1640. Genealogists have traced five generations of the Sherman family[2] who lived in the eastern English counties in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries. Thomas, the earliest of these English ancestors, lived in Diss, Suffolk, and died about the time of the discovery of America. He was entitled to call himself "gentleman," having received a grant of arms from Henry VII. The arms ("Or, a lion, rampant, sable, between three oak leaves vert") seem to have no obvious significance; but the crest ("A sea lion, sejant, sable, charged on the shoulder with three bezants, two and one") suggests that Thomas or his progenitors had grown rich through foreign trade. If Stuart Sherman ever saw the motto it must have pleased him—"*Mortem vince virtute.*" The family appears to have been prosperous; the will of the second Thomas Sherman (grandson of the first) disposes of two manors, besides estates in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Edmund Sherman, of Dedham, in Essex, great-grandson of the second Thomas, emigrated to America in 1634, with his sons Samuel and John. Samuel married Sarah Mitchell, who came over in the same ship, and settled in Stratford, Connecticut. Stuart Sherman was his descendant in the eighth generation. From John, who was a minister, are descended General William Tecumseh Sherman and his brother John, long a senator from Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury under President Hayes, and Secretary of State under President McKinley. Captain John Sherman, a cousin of Samuel and the Reverend

[2]For fuller information on these early English Shermans see an article on "The Sherman Family" in *Americana*, Vol. XII, pp. 255–264. Of the American Shermans this article deals only with some of the descendants of Philip.

John, was the great-grandfather of Roger Sherman[3] of Connecticut, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution. Another cousin, Philip, was the ancestor of Frank Dempster Sherman, the poet and genealogist. Collateral branches of the family had thus produced several men of eminence in politics, military affairs, and literature in the course of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. William Tecumseh and John Sherman were sixth cousins of Stuart's grandfather; Roger and Frank Dempster Sherman were more remotely related to him.

Stuart's grandfather, Ezra Wright Sherman, was born at Sheldon, Vermont, in 1814, and graduated from Middlebury College in 1840 with Phi Beta Kappa rank. He was a classmate and intimate friend of Edward J. Phelps, afterward United States Minister to England, and he and Mr. Phelps kept up a correspondence for nearly fifty years. Some of Phelps's letters to Ezra Sherman were published in *The Critic*[4] with comments by Ezra's daughter, Ellen Burns Sherman. Another classmate and correspondent was H. N. Hudson, the Shakespearian scholar. Ezra taught Latin for a year, then studied law, and was admitted to the Vermont bar. On account of ill health (he was thought to have tuberculosis) he gave up regular practice and became a farmer in Fairhaven, Vermont, continuing to do odd jobs of a legal sort, such as drawing up wills and deeds. At Fairhaven his son John, Stuart's father, was born. Later he bought a farm at Montgomery, Vermont, and in 1852 was elected to represent Montgomery in the state legislature. Soon after, still in search of health, Ezra moved his family to Abercorn, Quebec, just across the Vermont line. Either the severe Northern climate was effective as a cure, or Ezra's disease was of the sort that has been described as better than an insurance policy, for he lived to be eighty-four. A note in his own handwriting, preserved by the family, quaintly records the place and date of his birth and leaves space for record of his death, adding a sentence from Cicero: "*Et ex vita ita discedo, tamquam ex hospitio, non tamquam ex domo.*" To his wife, who was considerably his junior, he said rather grimly during his

[3]Senator Hoar of Massachusetts was a grandson of Roger Sherman. Chauncey Depew and General Nelson A. Miles were also of Sherman blood.

[4]Vol. XXXVI, pp. 405–409.

last illness: "You'll make a very successful widow." His daughter, Ellen Burns Sherman, remembers his gift of humorous speech. "Once," she says, "he had been ill for some time with pneumonia, and was being fed some soup, which was accidentally spilled on his beard. With a twinkle he feebly asked my mother, 'Is my mouth such a recondite affair that you can't find it?'" His daughter-in-law remembers him as "a very strict old man." In character and temperament, it would seem, he was not unlike Carlyle's father, with the advantage of college and professional training. If we may judge him by the tone of Minister Phelps's letters to him, it seems safe to say that he was not oppressively righteous and that he must have been excellent company. The letters are expressive and are liberally sprinkled with "damns." Phelps wrote him in 1868: "I do not see that you have grown old much since college days, and I fear that like myself you have not grown much better." Another letter begins:

MY DEAR SHERMAN:

I wish you were sitting on the other side of my fire to-night. It is raining hard, and blowing as 't would blow its last. There is no fear of any d——d good-natured friend dropping in with his head full of politics and the price of stocks, and no temptation to go abroad. We would talk ten volumes of the Congressional Record full before morning, though God forbid any of it should be such unutterable trash.

Ezra Sherman's wife, Harriet Ann Chase, Stuart's grandmother, was a descendant of Aquila Chase, who came to Massachusetts from Cornwall in 1639 or 1640,[5] and settled in Hampton, New Hampshire. Her father, Peter Chase, was a clergyman and a good Hebrew scholar. Her mother, Martha Stuart, was, as the name suggests, of Scotch descent. In her girlhood Harriet Chase Sherman was fond of writing verses, which she burned after her marriage. Like her husband, she had a turn for pointed and humorous phrase, and the strong literary bent in her children and grandchildren was no doubt in part an inheritance

[5] 1639, according to the anonymous author of the article on "The Sherman Family" cited on p. 2. It is noteworthy that the Shermans and Chases intermarried at least twice before Ezra married Harriet.

from her. Ezra and Harriet Sherman had nine children, of whom John, Stuart's father, was the second.

Stuart's maternal grandfather, Parsons Stewart Pratt, graduated from Hamilton College in 1842 and from Auburn Theological Seminary in 1846. After holding pastorates in Indiana, Michigan, and New York, he came in 1855 to the Congregational Church in Dorset, Vermont, which he served for forty-one years. For the remaining ten years of his life he was pastor emeritus; he died April 8, 1906, in his eighty-fourth year. In 1895 the church celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his pastorate and Middlebury College honored him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

His wife, Martha Ann Pollard, was a woman of an affectionate and lively disposition, the congenial companion of her three daughters. "I can imagine," says her daughter Ada, Stuart's mother, "she had a little trouble to get herself sedate enough, when she was a girl in Oneida County, to marry a real minister of the gospel. She used sometimes to sing one of her own songs:

> "'O, I can't be a nun,
> O, I won't be a nun,
> For I'm so fond of pleasure
> That I cannot be a nun.'

and then laugh it off and be dignified."

Zephine Humphreys, in *The Story of Dorset*, devotes a chapter to Dr. Pratt, and he appears prominently at various other points in the book. "Never," she says, "was anyone more thoroughly identified with us than this good quiet man. He was such a student, such a lover of the seclusion of his well-lined library, that one would not have expected him to meet us on so many sides. But human nature was dearer to him than books. Into our homes he came, really concerning himself about our affairs. . . . He prepared a genealogy of every family in the parish, sparing no pains to make his work as complete as possible."

After his retirement he "settled down to a quiet life among his books. Now and then he preached in the church, but for the most part he studied and mused in his library and continued his researches into Dorset genealogy. His serene old face wore the look of content which comes from the realization of a life well

spent, a work well done. Until his death in 1906 he was a beneficent presence in our midst." According to his obituary notice in the Bennington *Banner*, he was affectionately known as "Father Pratt" all over the state.

The writer of these chapters, who visited Dr. Pratt with Stuart in 1900, remembers the almost courtly hospitality with which he entertained the two college boys in his low-ceilinged study. A gentle, gray-bearded man, without a trace of Puritan austerity, he seemed a true spiritual descendant of the parson of the "Deserted Village." He was a lover of Charles Lamb and was himself a character in whom Elia would have delighted for his learning, goodness, and simplicity of heart. He was an inveterate diarist, and some of his laconic entries which concern his grandson will appear in this book.

John Sherman, Stuart's father, the second child of Ezra Wright and Harriet Sherman, was born at Fairhaven, Vermont, in 1849. There must have been a touch of genius in this son of the Vermont farmer-lawyer, whether or not it came from his verse-writing mother and her Cornish and Scottish forebears. He had a restless disposition and a great love of wandering; he was an inveterate reader and lover of poetry, and in temperament, though not in talent, a poet himself. He was a lover of music and a good singer; Stuart's ability in that direction certainly came from him. By some whimsical irony of destiny he became a druggist, "studying" at Metcalf's Pharmacy in Boston, and later working in a drug store at Brandon, Vermont. In 1875 he made a trip through the West and fell in love with the beauty of California; but when three years later he selected a place to start out in business for himself, some ill fortune guided his choice to the little town of Anita, Iowa. Here he bought a drug store and a farm of eighty acres; hither in 1879 he brought his bride, the Dorset minister's daughter; and here were born their two elder children, Persis and Stuart. John Sherman's health, however, suffered at Anita, and, as Mrs. Sherman writes, "the lure of the prairies overcame him." He sold his farm and his store, sent his wife and two young children back to Vermont for a visit, and "traveled over Kansas and Missouri and Iowa in the hope of finding a perfect farm." Again his choice was in some respects unlucky. "He finally bought 160 acres in Rolfe, Iowa—still farther north than Anita

—where the blizzards raged in winter and the cyclones scorched in summer." This was in 1882. Stuart Sherman's earliest memories were of the home in Rolfe.

John Sherman's literary bent appeared also in his youngest sister, Ellen Burns Sherman, who was the first member of the family to adopt literature as a profession. Miss Sherman has published three volumes of familiar essays, besides numerous contributions to periodicals, in prose and verse. An essay on "Modern Letter-Writing"[6] includes some letters to her from her nephew Stuart in his college and post-graduate days. Her earlier essays, though general in matter, are intensely literary in the Stevensonian manner. Stuart heartily admired this clever and accomplished aunt, and her rather elaborate style probably had some influence on his writing.

Stuart thus inherited the love of books from both sides of the family. Both his grandfathers were scholars, in different fashions; his father, though not a scholar, was a great reader; and in the two preceding generations of his father's family the desire to write had shown itself.

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[6]In *Words to the Wise—and Others*, Henry Holt & Co., 1907.

CHAPTER II

IOWA AND CALIFORNIA

BORN at Anita, October 1, 1881, Stuart Sherman had no recollection of his birthplace, since the family settled in their new home at Rolfe when he was a year old. Here John Sherman was a pioneer farmer. With the help of his brave and capable wife he was reasonably successful, and if his health had been strong enough to withstand the hard work and the rigors of the climate he might in a few years have become prosperous. No one knows the meaning of life on a pioneer farm better than the farmer's wife—if she will tell you. Stuart Sherman's mother has written of the family life at Rolfe as follows:

"We built a good house with double walls and storm windows with banking up to the windows. Here we lived for five years,—happy years they were, too, though full of hard work. John drove a team two or three miles to get stones to finish the foundations for our kitchen, built two barns—one for the horses and one for cows—dug wells, fenced in a great piece of ground for steers by driving in cottonwood stakes to grow for posts, planted a couple of acres of trees at the west for a wind-break, and more trees at the north. He bought a dozen cows and some pigs and chickens.

"Probably Iowa is the most interesting country in the world for healthy little children to live in—hearty and happy as little colts put out to pasture—with horses to ride, chickens to feed, and a dog for friend and pal. From morning till night there was never a question, 'What shall we do?'[1]

"As soon as baby Stuart found his feet, which was soon after he was a year old, his older sister led him around; they followed the sulky plow, or helped pick corn, or watched the big machine

[1] "You didn't restrict us much, nor make many demands, did you, mother?" wrote Stuart's older sister to Mrs. Sherman long afterward. "I have no recollection of your nagging us, or calling us to do or not to do this thing or that."

thresh the wheat. If no other excitement was at hand there was always the chance of a blizzard or a cyclone."

A second daughter, Katherine, was born at Rolfe.

Mrs. Sherman continues:

"When the children were four or five they learned their letters at their father's knee, and the next winter they went to the little country schoolhouse, half a mile away but in plain sight. That winter we watched the little trudging figures in many a winter storm or blizzard.

"On Sundays the whole family, accompanied by the cabinet organ in the big wagon, went to the same schoolhouse to lead and help along with Sunday school.

"Another excitement was prairie fires. Of course the first thing that was done before the house was built was to plow two or three furrows all around the house lot. A report would come that the prairies east of us were all ablaze coming towards us like wild horses. And once 'mother,' who was at the time the only able-bodied man on the place, went out and backfired way round the house lot. Sometimes John and Herman (the hired man) would harness the black span to the big wagon, throw in some planks, and the children and we would go out and burn around the hay stacks.

"Once when Herman was plowing with the sulky plow he some way cut his finger. He left the children, one on each horse attached to the plow, and came up to the house half a mile away, to have his finger tied up. The horses didn't run away and throw the babies under the dreadful sulky plow, but their father didn't stop to do up the finger till he had rescued his small children from their perilous position.

"Through the long winter days there are many hours when a man may read without feeling that anything is neglected. John used to sit and read Homer's Iliad by the hour, often stopping to read aloud a passage that was too fine to enjoy alone. He loved Seneca's philosophy and Milton's poetry and Shakespeare's plays. (I think I remember when Booth came to Los Angeles—almost the last time he played in Hamlet—and John went to hear him. How he did enjoy it!) As the children got a little older I used to read aloud to the family a great deal, and Stuart was always one of the listeners.

"The years flew by, the happiest, I think, of John's life—I

know they were of mine. He was successful in business, and how proud he was of his children and how fond! And he liked farming. In one of his letters to me he spoke of another '80' he would like to buy, east of our farm. 'Please, mother, say I may!' But he hated indebtedness and decided not to get it."

Mrs. Sherman's sketch is characteristic of her in its minimizing of hardships. When a heroine tells her story one must read between the lines. Some further glimpses of John Sherman's taste for books are given by his daughter Katherine, who writes: "He would read out loud some of the fine passages in the Iliad, making gestures which Stuart imitated. . . . As mother said, he 'enjoyed reading Shakespeare just as much as if he didn't know him mostly by heart.' He liked Bret Harte and he bought a set of Bulwer-Lytton. About Bulwer-Lytton he writes: 'I like some of his books but I am too much of a democrat to like him altogether. The mere accident of birth and position is worth more to him than a lifetime of devotion.'"

Like his mother and his sister Ellen Burns Sherman, Mr. Sherman wrote verses occasionally, and one of his poems, sent by his sister to the *Congregationalist* without his knowledge, appeared in that journal. It shows a sense for verse form, but is conventionally sentimental.

The Shermans lived, worked, and played happily on their farm at Rolfe for five years. In the winter of 1886–1887, however, John Sherman's hereditary enemy, tuberculosis, attacked him again. It was clear that he could not live long in the climate of Iowa. In May, 1887, he sold his farm and goods and moved with his family to Los Angeles, where his brother Ira was living. Stuart was then five and a half years old, and the journey was the first great landmark in his life. The change of surroundings was sudden and violent, from the farm on the Iowa prairie to the rapidly growing California city—"public library, churches, city schools, flowers and fruits and neighbors, balmy skies, never a blizzard or cyclone."[2]

Stuart's boyish autobiography, written when he was about thirteen or fourteen, shows what he remembered from the Iowa years, and something of what the journey and the new home meant to him. As a piece of writing it is highly creditable rather than precocious; many clever boys of thirteen can doubtless

[2]Mrs. Sherman.

write as well. Very few at that age, however, could manage to give so full and adequate an account of childish memories and impressions; in substance it succeeds rather surprisingly in accomplishing what the author set out to do. Unintentionally it reveals a boy who was keenly observant, sensitive, and introspective; and what is probably rarer than this, a boy who was resolutely honest in looking at and describing himself. He unflinchingly describes, for instance, his sister's protecting him at school and the timidity which kept him from following her when she went to look at the wolves. It requires intellectual integrity for a boy of thirteen to admit such things, even to himself; and still more to set them down in a narrative which he means to preserve. The autobiography is here printed exactly as it was written, except that two or three sentences about matters which preceded his own memories have been omitted.

"I was born in Cass County, Iowa, in the town of Anita. I was the second child of my parents who lived in moderate circumstances. My father, who was a rising young druggist of the town, had been there since its birth which happened a few years before mine. My sister, who was a year older than myself, used to have a great sense of proprietor-ship over me, and used often to fancy herself my second mother; but when I was very young she used to take a roughish delight in coming up behind me and pulling me over backwards. . . .

"When I was eight months old my mother took my sister and me to the home of her parent in Vermont. . . .

"Soon after this episode my father moved to Rolfe where he owned a farm of 160 acres. The first thing I remember distinctly in my life was one Easter morning in the second year of it. My aunt and my sister and I went out into the meadow to pick the big blue fuzzy flowers that grew there. These flowers were unlike any that I have seen elsewhere. They had for a calyx a little green felt jacket which they seemed in some doubt whether to take it off or not. These flowers we put in bread tins filled with wet sand and took to church. This church was a little building, about a mile from our house, that served week days for a schoolhouse. There I went with my sister at the age of three years, here we learned to spell our first word—cat. With what exultation we rushed home to announce our victory over the first ramparts of knowledge.

"About this time another daughter came to our house. I remember the occasion quite distinctly. I saw the little bald-headed, open-mouthed creature and wondered whose it was and why it was there. My recollections of the baby are not very distinct after that time.

"My older sister and I were as devoted to each other as David and Jonathan and the little one was left to shift for herself as far as we were concerned.

"Daisy, as my older sister was called on account of her supposed resemblance to that flower, Daisy and I were inseperable. We used to go to school together, where she used to champion me, for the bigger boys used to bother me, and plague me on account of my size and babyish ways. We used to play truant together also; but she was the leader in this for I was afraid and dared not go alone. One day my father and mother went away to town before school time in the morning, my mother promising that if we were good children she would bring us a bag of marbles. Suffice it to say we were not. Hardly had the wagon rolled out of sight before we had started off to the house of a neighbor whose children did not go to school. When my parents came home we received something, but it wasn't the marbles. This is the first recollection that I have of doing wrong. A sense of heavy guilt pervaded my mind all day long, and the pleasure of an extra holiday was tiny beside the guilt that burdened my little three-year-old soul. I always did have a very delicate conscience. Its prick I often felt sharper than a pin at things other children would have forgotten as soon as done. On my fifth birthday my grandfather, who was attending a minister's conference, came to our house and gave me $5. This money I kept for eight years afterward. About this time my father, whose health had been poor ever since an attack of pneumonia that he had some time before, decided to sell his farm and go to California. I remember riding with him to the town of Gilmore to post notices of the auction sale. The day for the auction was a great day for us children. It seems to me as if thousands of people had been there. Mother had a barrel of apples put in the pantry for the men to help themselves and at noon biscuits were passed around.

"I had little appreciation of the distance we were going nor did I really comprehend that we were leaving. I had few regrets

except that I hated to have my big iron-grey colt sold, and I had a box red painted and a pair of new hinges on it that my father had just made for me. He took the hinges off and I took them with me, he also promised to make me a new box when we got to California. This helped me some, but it pained me a good deal to see a hen and her chickens put into my precious red box and it carried off by a heartless neighbor. The last night we stayed at neighbor White's. They had a royal feast for us in the evening and watermelons and muskmelons for desert. Then I left the scene of my babyhood. Left behind me forever, the well out in the grove. My sister and I had dug it and when it was finished we measured it. It was as deep as the bottom of my pocket, and then out by the corn crib was our hill rising like the tower of Babel toward the skies. This was another of the improvements that my sister and I had put on the farm. When we ate our slices of bread and sugar out doors we climbed up on our hill so that the hens could not peck at our bread.

"So also we forgot till long after incidents which time revealed as memorable events of our childhood—that Christmas night, the first in memory, we had been tucked snugly into our warm crib—it was a bitter night—and all were supposed to be asleep in it, but our childish fancies were all awake waiting for Santy to come when we heard a noise in the sitting room. My sister and I tripped quietly out in our little white feet and gowns and peeked through the door. There I saw my father sawing sections from a round log and boring holes in the sections with an auger. These I at once recognized as cart wheels. In the middle of the floor was mother filling the stockings that we had so firmly expected to be filled by a great white bearded man. This was our first and last dream of Santy.

"I well remember my first pair of top boots. My father took me to Rolfe one winter day on a lumber wagon without the box on it. He bought the boots and I put them on to ware home. They were beautiful boots, copper toes and bright red tops. I sat on the cross piece of the wagon and kicked my feet and grinned then kicked them again, bye and bye I kicked them because my feet were cold, and the boots were new and tight, and when I got home I could not get them off and my feet ached and I cried and wished I had my old shoes on. Father said I must have a boot-jack.

"One day father had been digging a well. He had his old boots on and they were covered with clay from the bottom of the well. He went to the pump and washed them off under it. I thought that it was a manly thing to do, so I went and washed my new red boots under the pump. Most of the water went inside; it didn't feel good and squashed when I stepped; but it was a manly thing to do so I didn't care. Father said I must not do it. I did not see why but I do now.

"One time Herman cut a piece from a plug of tobacco. It fell to the ground. Herman cut another piece and went away. My sister and I took the piece that he left and cut it into two equal parts and chewed and swallowed them. We were both sick. It was awful. I did not want any more tobacco. It made me feel as if I couldn't live and didn't want to. I didn't love my mother any more, I just wanted to die. My sister and I didn't play much that day.

"Up in our garret were pieces of beef hanging up to dry. My sister and I took a knife and went up there and stood on a chair and cut off a big hunk of it for tobacco. We took it out into the carriage house, got into the carriage, and chewed it and spit and thought it was the grandest thing on earth. When I was a very little boy, the day I put on my first pair of pants I took a piece of brown bread and cut it up for tobacco. I put it into my pocket, the first pocket of my life—and was happy. I was not happy after I ate the real tobacco and never even played with the brown kind afterward.

"My mother used to have a box of homeopathic medicine upstairs. My sister and I once went upstairs and ate half of a bottle of them, they tasted so good. We are both alive yet.

"Sometimes exciting things happened too. There were big prairie fires. All the western horizon was once on fire. At night it came nearer. A man came to get my father and they went and plowed around the school house to keep it from burning.

"One time my sister and I lost the carriage wrench. My father told us that we could not play any more till we found it. We hunted a long time but could not find it. We were hunting when we had our auction and never found it; but we have played since."

Many years later Stuart Sherman made a list of "Iowa Memories—1881–1885," perhaps with a view to writing a

reminiscent essay. His notes add a good many incidents and impressions to those mentioned in the autobiography. There was the swallows' nest in the barn, the haymow where the children searched for eggs, and its dusty smell in winter. There was the hunting of a black snake. "We liked to catch snakes," says Stuart's older sister and playmate, "we sometimes killed them, but we loved to see them dart out their little red tongues." There was the Sunday-school lesson about the Golden Calf, a picture of which was drawn with yellow chalk on the blackboard in the schoolhouse, and the subsequent building of an altar out of small mud bricks. There were the delights of playing store at the school and of playing ship in the carriage. There were various farm events: the birth of a calf, a horse gored by a bull, the smell of medicaments used in poulticing him, the slaughter of the "beef critter," the killing of a couple of skunks, the cutting of a dog's leg by the mowing machine. There were winter memories of riding a led horse over snowdrifts, of cold drives under buffalo robes, of the red-hot stove in the general store at Rolfe, and the stick-candy obtained there. There were the barrels of apples sent from the old home in Vermont, and the box of oranges, each wrapped in paper, from a relative in Florida. There was the loaf of Vermont maple sugar, kept in a cupboard within the children's reach, and an irresistible temptation to them. There was the fair at Des Moines, and the red and green balloons which the children took to bed with them, but which unaccountably vanished by morning. Once the boy attended a prairie funeral, and he remembered the long drive across the fields, the stuffed room and the solemn faces.

The young autobiographer continues:

"Finally we were on the train for California. We stopped several times on the way to see some friends of father's. One man had some tame wolves and he wanted to show them to Daisy and me. Daisy went with him but I stayed at home with mother. I was afraid the wolves would eat me. I always admired Daisy, but did not try to imitate her—I was afraid to.

"The next thing I remember is the sleeping car. Papa and I went up into the upper berth which made me feel quite superior to Daisy for the rest of the journey. At Omaha we stopped to see my uncle Charles. At the station there was a dancing hall

and many people were dancing. This was the first time I had ever seen anyone dance. We went to my uncle's store. He was not there, and the man that was there telephoned for him. When he came he gave Daisy and me each a piece of gum, then he took us all out to drive.

"The next thing I remember is the Needles. On the depot steps were fifteen or twenty half naked Indians; the men lying in dirty indolence against the sunny side of the depot smoking their dirtier pipes, the women, some young and with a certain rude grace of movement to their dark limbs; others old, stiff, grey-haired, their backs bent to a semi-circle, selling little trinckets of baked clay. Daisy bought one for one dime. One dime was the universal price. The train rolled away; and as we looked out of the window, we saw in the distance the three tall thin peaks or Needles. Soon we crossed the muddy waters of the Colorado and were in California. My childish fancy had concluded that California was a little wilderness half filled with rattlesnakes; naturally I did not look forward to it with very great pleasure. But as I crossed the Colorado I left my babyhood behind and stepped out in the broader path of boyhood. I saw that California was a big place, and I couldn't see a single snake from the window although we were going through the great Mohave desert. At last we arrived in California in Los Angeles the city of the Angels.[3] We went first to a hotel in town. The next day my uncle Ira came with a carriage to take us to our first home. The horses reared and plunged so that mother was afraid to go with him, so she took us children on the horse cars. The house was a little wooden one on Pachico St. Over the porch a sweet honeysuckle hung, and the little garden was fragrant with Jesamine, and lemon-verbena and tea-roses. We only stayed a month when we moved to a little adobe cottage on Hope Street. This was a little low house probably built by the Spaniards. In the back room we found an old rusty dagger. This filled the house with romance for us children. In front of the house was a little orange orchard and in back two big fig trees. There were besides a few grape vines from which my sister and I carefully picked all the grapes just before they were ripe. Here we made our first acquaintance with Ada Haskell who lived next door. We played store together. She was the rich

[3]May, 1887.

member of our little company having a little leather bag filled with bits of evenly cut glass which was legal tender for us.

"A couple of months after we came to Hope St. my father bought a house 107 N. Figueroa. It was about ¾ of a mile from Broadway but still out of the busy part of town, perched on a big hill. Our neighbors were the Eachers, an old couple and their daughter Annie who afterwards became a playmate of ours, and the Kinglebacks, a family of German scrappers.

"My father at this time owned a drug store for which he had traded his farm. I used to spend much of my time there. He had a Spanish clerk named Morriss who took a great fancy to me. Whenever I went to the store he had a great pile of picture cards saved up for me. He had a habit when he showed me how to do anything of saying "See" "See." I used to steal a terrible amount of chewing gum from the case until my father caught me at it. I didn't take so much afterwards. At first I would only chew it as long as the flavor lasted when I would throw it into the street.

"About this time I first began to go to school. The first day my mother took my sister and me to school and left us a little while before the bell rang. When it rang my sister and I were seized with a sudden fear of the older boys and the teacher and fled. On the way home we got lost but our address was fortunately written in our school books and a woman showed us the way home. We never ran away after this for our mother taught us that it was wrong in a very expressive manner.

"After I had been to school about a year, I made the acquaintance of a boy Riv Nimock, who was my friend for the next six years. He was two years older than I but we were much alike in our likes and dislikes and a vague love of the wild life of the cow-boy. We used to go down town and gaze in at the shop windows at the guns and saddles and imagine that the happiest life in the world would be to live like an Indian or a cow-boy riding a Mexican mustang with a rifle across our knees.

"One time we worked for a week collecting all the old tin cans for miles around and piling them up on a heap of brush to burn, like an old Chinese junk man, for the solder. The solder we molded into bullets and shot in our sling at birds which we never hit."

When Stuart was taking Dean Briggs's composition course

at Harvard he wrote a sympathetic essay on "Dime Novels and Their Readers" which includes a pleasant reminiscence of these California school days.

"Parents are wise in tabooing the dime novel; thereby they add to its perusal a relish which they themselves in Browning Clubs have sought and sought in vain. Who can forget his first dime novel? You read it in school, perhaps, when your teacher trusted you and let you sit in the back seat—I did. A red-haired boy with freckles and a snub nose carried the contraband goods through the lines; those little novels seem made expressly to ride under the blouse of the youthful smuggler. The red-haired boy read the story in the morning session, and in the afternoon, in a burst of generosity, shoved it across the aisle to me. At first I kept it in my lap and divided my attention between it and Harper's Geography. Later, at a hint from the owner, I slid it craftily upon the desk where it lay excellently masked by the broad covers of the geography. I failed that day to bound the state of California, but of the beautiful white slave in the golden fetters I could recount the travels from the Rio Grande to San Francisco Bay."

One of the deepest of these early impressions seems to have been made by the experience of looking into the shop windows at guns and saddles. In a letter written in April, 1920, to his former pupil, Samson Raphaelson, Stuart says: "I should like to revisit Los Angeles and revive the day when the height of my ambition, fed by looking in at the windows where Spanish saddles and guns were exhibited, was to be a cow-boy. When I write my novel, I shall draw on that!" In July of the same year, he tries in his diary to trace his love of an out-of-door life, his "taste for the wild," and attributes its origin to "looking into sporting-goods windows in Los Angeles."

Some further details of the Shermans' life in California are remembered by Stuart's sister Katherine (Mrs. Gilbert). The house on Figueroa Street was small (it had five rooms) and rather scantily furnished, but the yard was a children's paradise. "The little place had everything—a tall eucalyptus tree at the rear which seemed to grow like Jack's bean stalk, an apricot tree loaded with strange delicious fruit, a peach tree which gave us one magnificent peach, a fig tree for all our fairies, white grapes, and best of all, innumerable roses, Martha

Washington geraniums, calla lilies and heliotrope. Over the entire front of the house was a climbing red rose, and the side porch was screened with a vine having a peculiar purple flower." Here in 1888 John Sherman, Jr., was born, and was welcomed by his father with a gay little poem.

Mrs. Gilbert recalls the walk to school with Stuart and Daisy, "through mustard which was way over our heads, past high hedges and through a long lane where jessamine hung over high fences and ancient pepper trees made dainty shadows." There were expeditions to Chinatown by moonlight on the Chinese New Year, to the ranch recently bought by two young Germans who had worked on the farm at Rolfe and followed the family to California, and to the beaches at Redondo and Santa Monica. A two weeks' visit to Long Beach inspired Stuart's earliest poem. He sent it to the Los Angeles *Times* with the following letter:

DEAR MR. OTIS:

I wrote a little poetry and I should like to have it printed if you think it's good enough. It's the first piece I ever wrote.

STUART SHERMAN.

The poem was entitled "On the Sunny Shore."

"On the sunny shore
On the sunny sea
I love more and more
On them both to be.

"The breakers dash on the shore
Washing up shells
On the beautiful shore
From their ocean cells.

"Where the moss grows green
When the ocean breeze
Catches the mist
On the beautiful seas

"When the daybreak comes
We are out on the sunny sea
Or on the sunny shore
Glad in their beauty evermore."

Stuart's new friendship with "Riv" Nimock emancipated him from feminine society. "Riv was a regular boy—proud, athletic—a woman-hater. He and 'Socks,' as he called Stuart, constructed a trapeze in the back yard. They caught butterflies in a net, collected bird's eggs and stones, picnicked in West Lake and East Lake Parks and on the Los Angeles river, scraped acquaintance with the 'Chicken—turkey—hot-tamale' man, made bonfires. . . . About 1889 or 1890 a deep cut was made in our hill and a cable car came out from town. On the Fourth of July Stuart and Riv hung their legs over the edge and fired their crackers in the resounding chasm. My father had given Stuart a whole quarter for fire crackers."

Mr. Sherman did not find the health which he sought in California. His daughter says that he was "never well" there. After about two years he was no longer able to go to work at the drug store. "But," says Mrs. Gilbert, "there were no complaints. One day at dinner I said, peevishly, no doubt, 'O, it's cold!' At once a baked potato flew at me across the table from my father. 'Say you're cold, not it's cold,' he corrected me. I was forcibly made aware of his love for the refinements of speech and of his resolution that no criticism should be made of our home life. But how he must have craved the comfort of a fire on those chill mornings and evenings!"

In 1891 Mr. Sherman visited San Jacinto and other health resorts in a vain effort to find a climate which would help him. He bore his long illness pluckily; his letters, his sister says, "were always illuminated by fanciful whimsies and brave humor." But his active mind and restless spirit were sorely tried by the weakness and imprisonment of his body. "Being ill," he said, "was a weary calling." At the last, his daughter Persis says, he was "impatient to go." "He couldn't bear to read of the deaths of some of the poets and writers who died before he did. He thought he should have gone instead. One of my last recollections of him was hearing him sing from his hymn book as he lay on his bed on Sunday morning while some of us were getting ready to go to church." He died at the little house on Figueroa Street on December 12, 1892. "It is pleasant," says his younger daughter, "to think that his spirit is still among the golden poppies, for he wrote many years earlier, 'When we die, our spirits will go to California.'" If the test

of success in fatherhood is the love and admiration of one's children, John Sherman must have been almost an ideal father.

Stuart was eleven years old when his father died. His mother says that he now "changed from a rather timid child to an eager responsive boy who began to feel that he was the man of the house and must look out for the family." His uncle, who had a drug store in Omaha, offered to take Stuart into his home and employ him as a clerk, but Mrs. Sherman would not consent to this. The question of a living, however, was pressing. Mrs. Sherman bought a cow and some chickens, and Stuart learned to milk. He and Daisy worked in an orchard and later in a cannery. Mrs. Sherman tried bookselling from door to door, but her sales were small. Stuart fully understood that the problem of the family was a serious one, and that he must contribute all he could to its solution. He was too vividly alive to be oppressed by this new sense of obligation, but he never forgot it, and his character was early matured by it.

Meantime the family made new friends. In the autumn of 1893 the Hubbs family moved into the neighborhood; Mr. Hubbs was a gold miner who had had many interesting adventures in Arizona and New Mexico and was planning to start soon on another gold-seeking expedition. With him were his wife and little son and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Goss. "We promptly fell in love with the entire family," says Mrs. Gilbert. "We had Thanksgiving dinner together; Mrs. Hubbs made a rhyme to describe each member of both families. We also had Christmas together with a big shiny tree. Mr. Hubbs, Mrs. Hubbs, and Mrs. Goss were excellent story-tellers. We all thrilled at their marvelous adventures." The Hubbses were especially attracted to Stuart and offered to take him with them on their projected trip.

A sensitive boy cannot spend the impressionable years between his seventh and his thirteenth birthdays in such a country as California without some lasting effects upon his imagination. The extent of such influences cannot be traced with certainty; but one is tempted to say that the light and color of California play through most of Stuart Sherman's writing. A delight in pure color, in sharp contrast, a certain almost tropical excess of expressiveness, a passion for imagery—these traits appear in his style whenever he gives his temperament free rein. They

are more conspicuous in his earlier and in his later work than in the work of his middle period, when he was deliberately subduing the imaginative side of himself. If he was a son of the middle border, and a grandson of New England, he was a loyal foster son of California.

CHAPTER III

ARIZONA MINER

THE boy who would stand for hours staring through plate-glass windows at Spanish saddles and imagining that the happiest life in the world would be to live like an Indian or cowboy, would not be likely to lose a chance to go on a gold-seeking expedition. When Mr. and Mrs. Hubbs offered to take Stuart with them to Arizona it seemed to him that the great opportunity of his life had come. His mother naturally demurred; but she liked and trusted the new friends, and she recognized the force of their arguments. The outdoor life would be a fine thing for Stuart, and he could well spare a few months from school for the sake of the strength he would gain from it. To let the boy go involved various risks, and there had never been a time when Mrs. Sherman felt the need of him so keenly. But to keep him at home meant the certainty of bitter disappointment to him, and the possibility of denying him an experience which in the matter of health and otherwise might be of the greatest value. The plan was not a hasty one; Mr. Hubbs knew the country and would have a well-equipped camp, and he and his wife would take good care of Stuart. His mother gave her consent, and the event proved her wisdom. In January, 1894, he set out with the Hubbses for Black Cañon, Arizona. They went by train from Los Angeles to Prescott and by wagon and on foot the rest of the way.

Two or three years later Stuart wrote a story entitled "Wah Lung's Visitor," in which he transferred one of his own adventures at Black Cañon, somewhat embellished, to an imaginary Chinese cook. The scene of the story is the Hubbses' camp, and its opening pages will furnish the best available introduction to the Arizona experiences. For Tom Bryson, of course, we should read Charley Hubbs. It begins as a tale of adventure should.

"In all the great barren territory of Arizona there is probably

not a wilder or more desolate spot than Tom Bryson's placer claim.

"In the heart of the wilderness, rising and emptying no one knows where, Turkey Creek wanders through the thirsty sands of the Black Cañon. At Bryson's camp it stops awhile to rest, forming a broad deep pool whose refreshing moisture has encouraged a little clump of cottonwoods into quite a respectable growth.

"This, however, is the only verdure in sight; on three sides of the cañon the bare, grey hills roll backward up into the mountains, their hot sandy sides destitute of vegetation save for the sprawling cactus, the cats-claws, and an occasional clump of sage brush.

"The nearest railroad train whistled sixty miles away at Prescott. A stage was driven once a week from Prescott to Phoenix, and this passed through Bumblebee, fifteen miles from the cañon. . . .

"As soon as the party (Bryson, his wife and two year old son, five men that he had picked up in Prescott, and ten burros carrying provisions) reached the spot chosen for the camp, Bryson and his men got to work at putting up a cook-house. This was set about a hundred yards back from the creek on a little knoll nearly free from cactus. The sides were built of rough boards with a canvas tent fly stretched tightly over the top to keep out the rain. A big cook stove was placed at the farther end of the room; on two nails driven in the wall above it Bryson's rifle hung; back of it the pans and kettles of the culinary department were set in a cupboard constructed of packing boxes; in the center of the room, occupying nearly the whole length, was the table made of the same rough material as the shack; on the wall were hung strips of dried beef; at the end of the room near the door was Wah Lung's bunk; and hanging over the door, a horse shoe shaped piece of iron which he pounded with another piece of iron to announce that 'grub' was ready.

"The cook having been snugly provided for and set to work preparing the supper of bread and bacon, the men put up a rough shack for themselves to sleep in, and Bryson set up his tent for himself and his family."

From this scene Stuart wrote to his mother of the journey.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

Black Cañon,
Tues. 30, 1894.

DEAR MA,

This is the first chance I have had to write you a letter. We started from Prescott Tuesday, Mr. Hubbs and I. We walked to Cortez 13½ miles from camp the first day. We started from Prescott at 9.45 A. M. and arrived at 8. P. M. We went to bed and in the morning got breakfast and started. We got to the camp about noon. We ate dinner and then Mr. Hubbs went up on the mesa to look for his horses. Mr. Peterson did not get the letter which Mr. Hubbs wrote and that he should have got a week before. Mr. Hubbs got back from the mesa about five o'clock. He then shod his horse and we ate supper and went to bed in the wagon. We got up in the morning when the stars were shining and Mr. Hubbs started back for Prescott with the wagon. He got back Sunday afternoon, being delayed a day by the sickness of one of the horses.

On the mountain road one of the horses just lay down in the harness and kicked around for two hours. Monday Mr. Hubbs, Mr. Peterson and I went out hunting for [elk] or maverick. We hunted till about four in the afternoon without success, then we came home and ate dinner. Then Mr. Hubbs and I went out again. About six o'clock he shot a good beast. I went to camp and got a couple of men and some sacks, and went to where the beast lay. It was then pitch dark. They skinned and quartered the beast and it took five of us to carry it home. It was half-past seven then. When we got to camp the men just sat down and played cards for an hour or more. Pete and I sleep in the cook house. The three men sleep in a tent and Mr. and Mrs. H. in theirs. Pete sleeps in a cot and I on the ground. About the fifth of next month the men all but Mr. Pete and Mr. H. are going with York to the Colorado River on a prospecting trip. Pete and I will have their tent then and it will be warmer then. My hands are chapped and bleed a little from the cold. The day after I got here I went with two of the men up to the post box but their was no mail for me. Saturday night Pete and I went up again at 8 o'clock but got no mail. Coming back in the dark I fell over a rock into a cactus bush and stole some needles. When we got to camp I dug them out with my

knife. It made me a little lame and Pete wanted me to put some Mexican Lightning on it but I did not. It was all right in a couple of days. For meals we have had viz.

Breakfast	coffee pan-cakes bacon no butter or milk
Dinner	tea, bacon—auful fat, potatoes usually, biscuit.
Supper	tea bacon biscuit

(Pete's biscuit are usually green with envy or soda I don't know which.)

Since our new cook has come we shall have more variety and better. And we have over 300 lbs. of fresh meat. Please send me some stamps. I want a letter too.

Love to you and the kids.

Your loving son,

STUART SHERMAN.

The beast shot by Mr. Hubbs was doubtless a "maverick," or unbranded heifer. "Elk" is a euphemism; the reader will notice that the wily young adventurer is careful not to commit himself as to the genus of the "beast."

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

Black Cañon,
Thurs. 1, 1894.

DEAREST LITTLE MA:—

You may wonder why I have not answered some of the questions you have asked. The reason is that I had not received one letter till yesterday. When I got five letters and two papers,

Old lady Bumblebee did not send them down to the box. I got a letter from grandpa Pratt with two or three postal cards, 4 stamps, paper, and an envelope. I suppose he wants me to write him. But I commenced work yesterday and have little time and I am writing now by the light of a candle. You asked me if I cried—I did not but as the cars left you out of sight I felt like it. But I would not go back now if anyone would pay my way (If the work is a little hard). You speak as if you thought I am killing myself by my work. On the contrary I never was so well in my life. And you see I couldn't be very lame as the day after I got here I walked 2½ miles, the next day 4 miles, and the next 12 mi. or more. Mike the Irishman is all right, he found an immense nugget worth (5¢) five cents. We have fine meals now that Mrs. Hubbs cooks. This letter must be short as I "*aint* got *no* time." I'll write a lot Sunday to you all and Riv. too. Tell Daisy she will have to keep her short-hand for some other time as for the aforesaid reason. This is about seven o'clock and Mr. Chipman is going to start so good-bye.

Your loving son,
STUART SHERMAN.

"Aint" I getting a beautiful signature.

The post office at Bumblebee is described in "Wah Lung's Visitor."

"Once a week a man was sent to Bumblebee for the mail. On these occasions he also carried with him a bottle of gold dust which he exchanged for bacon, flour and potatoes.

"The store, the postoffice and the only house in Bumblebee were one and the same building, and were all controlled and owned by a woman. She was a good talker and had little chance to exercise her talents; so, when Bryson's man went up from the cañon, she used to pour the entire mail out on the floor; set her seven dirty little barefooted children to sorting it; then sat down herself and told the news that the stage-driver had given her. By this time the children had the mail ready. When he had put into his pocket the letters, often sticky from contact with the floor and seven pairs of grimy hands, Bryson's man traded his bottle of gold at eighteen dollars an ounce for provisions; put his pack on his back; and went down into the cañon, not to hear more of the world for another week."

A later letter gives an expense account, assures his mother of his comfort "now that I have a cot to sleep on," and asks for a pair of gloves. "Please send the gloves as soon as you possibly can for I need them fearfully." Other letters boast of getting three cents' worth of gold out of one pan, and tell of his reading: "Since I started I have read *Old Mortality* by Sir Walter Scott, *Willy Reilly* by William Carleton and the *Millionare's Folly* by M. L. Jensky. I got *Old Mortality* in Prescott for 15¢. Please send all the papers you can. . . . You see we must be pretty hard up for reading matter when the men are eager for *Cinderella* and just beg for the paper that came around my gloves. . . . Remember lots of literature."

A letter from Mrs. Hubbs to Mrs. Sherman introduces a complication in the plot. Mrs. Sherman, finding it impracticable to make a living for her family in Los Angeles, was considering a return to her old home in Vermont. "Stuart seems much set against it," says Mrs. Hubbs. "We have both of us quietly used our influence to persuade him to the contrary. For some reasons I am rather sorry he came at all with us. Not so much so now that those men have gone but their incredibly filthy and profane language was dreadful for him to have to listen to. We have always extended to him the heartiest of welcomes to our tent, but he has a feeling that he intrudes, I think, for he never comes without urging and 'once every so often' he says he must be going. The worst he will have to bear now is loneliness. Another thing that troubles me is his work. Mr. Hubbs is so considerate of him, when he sees him at heavy work he always stops him and when he looks tired he tells him to stop and rest. Instead of stopping he gets the ax and chops wood and attacks the biggest trees he can find and drags up the heaviest logs. I scold and nag at him till I am tired but he is ambitious of doing a man's work.

"Now I have told you frankly all the draw-backs. He works well and faithfully and seems happy and light-hearted as he did there as far as I can see. It would do you good to see him out with Len singing at the tops of their voices.

"You told me to keep him from wearing his good clothes. He declares he can't get into his old coat and whenever he wears one at all, which is not often, puts on the good one. His good hat he wears when he can't find the other one but never

without a vigorous protest on my part. He has his bath and clean underclothes and I keep him pretty decently darned but he won't read his Bible and will read novels. One he read I should have burned had I seen it before he read it. As it was I advised him not to read it but he persisted he had nothing else to read. The papers you sent are much appreciated by us all. . . ."

Stuart's attempt to do the lion's share of the work is amusingly characteristic. Mrs. Hubbs's anxiety about his association with the rough miners gives a glimpse of one phase of his Arizona education. The "incredibly filthy and profane language" doubtless interested him, but it did not hurt him. The boy who bunked in the cook house with Pete and panned dirt in friendly rivalry with Mike gained thereby a sympathy with the average working man and a basis for enduring faith in him. Stuart's New England education did not dim his appreciation of his Arizona friends. When he was a graduate student at Harvard in 1903–1904 he wrote several sympathetic sketches of them, which he submitted as themes in Dean Briggs's course in composition. Two of these little portraits follow.

"Mike O'Sheehan is another of the Black Cañon miners whom the 'yellow phantom' has driven mad. The search for gold becomes an insane craze in the midst of great cities; but, when it has lured men into the solitude of the desert, it rides them like an incubus. It is the regular thing for this big, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired Irishman to rise three or four times in the night, and kneeling on the edge of his bunk, to mumble for a half an hour at a time over a pan of gravel which he imagines that he is washing. At the first light of day he sets out with pick and prospecting pan, always in a new direction, bent upon great discovery. He never brings back but a few grains of gold; but his excitement, far from abating with reiterated failure, increases, and every day he expects to return laden with riches in great nuggets. There is something very suggestive in his faith through a life-long search for the substance of which he can but 'follow the gleam.' If he were a German mystic or a Princeton professor, he would tell you that he is in quest of the 'blue flower'; Mike, who is not a symbolist, refers to his profession as 'shuvlin' durrut.'"

"On the road to Phoenix six miles out of Prescott lives the widow Thorne. Arizona is an uncivilized state, backward in manners and morals. Mrs. Thorne is not a virtuous woman. In a country where the decalogue is fashionable she would not do at all; yet she has some qualifications of physique and character which adapt her excellently to her rugged environment. She stands nearly six feet tall and is strong, lithe, and active. She will ride after wild horses over the roughest country up hill and down at breakneck speed. She will lasso a bronco in the corral and throw him and brand him as well as the best cowboy on the range. But what I admire most in Mrs. Thorne is her almost despotic independence in matrimonial relations. Though she is considered one of the handsomest women in Yavapai county, she is living at present in a state of emancipated blessedness. She has tried the great experiment three times without finding a mate to her mind. The first happily died a natural death. The second was shot by the third in a quarrel rising out of jealousy. For a time she lived peaceably with her last venture, but at length his charms palled also. He was a weakling and she a woman of character. One morning as he sat in the dooryard mending his saddle, the huge barrel of a buffalo gun appeared in the window and the voice of the widow Thorne behind it said 'Git!' He gat."

Two fragments of letters to his mother show Stuart's extreme unwillingness to become an Easterner. The first states his position rather summarily: "Even if you go back East I shall stay here and if you feel as if you must go, why go, I can look out for myself all right." When this was questioned or overruled, he sat down and developed his arguments formally and in detail. It is regrettable that his "firstly" and "secondly" are lost.

"In the third place I am wanted here especially now. Mr. H. will very likely go to Cal. to show off the iron mines to people who think considerable of buying and unless I stay here Mr. H. will have to take Mrs. H. to Prescott and all the expense of hotel bills etc. incurred and he wants very much that I should stay. He will be gone perhaps two weeks. I am your son and a minor. I must according to law do as you tell me but you have no adviser as you had when papa was living and I felt when I got your letters that I must wait for an answer to this letter. I am

learning a great many things here and getting strong and I am always well. I am doing almost a man's work eating two mens meals and feel as if I had the muscle of 4 men. At Barstow if the iron mines sell as they very likely will I can get a job of good pay and if I allow you to perhaps you can run a boarding house. But be it as it may *I* can never consent to go back East under such conditions as you propose. Though if you tell me so I must. If you feel as if you must go, why go: but you need not take me.

"I have learned a great deal of the ways of the world since I left you and I feel at least 10 yrs. older. I can run the engine now alone and can jabber some Spanish. I have read everything in camp but a book Mr. H. lent me. *Manual of Mineralogy and Lithology* by the best writer on the subject, Darra.—I shall study it thouroughly. You see I am taking a pretty good course of study don't you. I have written enough for to-night so good-night.

"Your dutiful and loving son,
"STUART SHERMAN."

Evidently this argument convinced the court; he stayed in Arizona until late in August, when the Hubbses' venture came to an end. Meantime, in March, 1894, the Sherman family moved from Los Angeles to Dorset. In the same month Stuart had an adventure which he thought it would be imprudent to communicate to his mother. One night the Hubbses were startled by shrieks coming from the "cook house" where Stuart slept. When Mr. Hubbs went to investigate, "Stuart said he was awakened by a howling noise and saw a wild-cat a few feet from his bed inside the cabin and between him and the gun, which is always hanging on the wall. He explained that he wasn't screaming from fright, but knew wild beasts were afraid of the human voice."[1] Mr. Hubbs thought he had had a nightmare; but the next morning the lynx reappeared and entered the Hubbs tent in broad daylight. Mr. Hubbs shot it, and Stuart kept one of its paws as a souvenir. When Mrs. Sherman heard of this affair, she regretted having given her consent to Stuart's remaining in Arizona. Mrs. Hubbs, however, wrote her reassuringly: "He sleeps now with his room

[1]Letter from Mrs. Hubbs to Mrs. Goss, March 24, 1894.

barricaded; two barrels and an old comforter fastened tight for a portière complete the fortifications. He also has the rifle in the room and a pistol on the table beside him. So you needn't worry on that score, and he is getting to be a fine shot. He went out the other day with six cartridges and returned with four birds, quails and pigeons. He doesn't seem at all inclined to want to go back; says you have three children there now. . . . The new camp we are going to is only 18 miles from the railroad and one mile from a stage connecting which passes six times a week. So he will be from one to three days nearer you than now."[2] Mr. Hubbs too wrote giving an account of Stuart's progress. "We would like very much to keep Stuart at same wages. We like him and he is useful to us. Yet if you say he *must* return we will insist on his going, altho he is very desirous of remaining with us. . . . I think Stuart is improving in many ways—intellectually and otherwise. We have a schoolteacher examination book, covering almost everything desirable in the way of book knowledge in brief, and he does not ignore it. I must be off for the horses."[3]

The shadow of a shotgun rests upon the next letter. In both paragraphs Stuart leads up to the daring proposal that he should buy one; but he does not quite get it stated until the last sentence of the postscript. S. Valley is Skull Valley. The *Tokology* is the book Mrs. Sherman had been trying to sell. "Len" is the Hubbses' little boy.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

Black Cañon,
April 13, [1894].

DEAREST LITTLE MA,

We have not gone yet but expect to be off by the 17th or 18th. S. Valley is 18 mi. west of Prescott and I can ride in if I want to in a very short time. We are going to mine for gold there but on a different plan. We are going to run a dry washer there. I think it will be a great deal pleasanter there than here; there will be so much more variety. I will ride probably about three times a week to the postoffice. Ten or twelve miles round trip.

[2]Letter from Mrs. Hubbs to Mrs. Sherman, April 14, 1894.
[3]Letter from Mr. Hubbs to Mrs. Sherman, April 17, 1894.

And there will be an occasional ride to Prescott. And there will be lots of shooting. We manage here with the little rifle to get enough small game for Mrs. H.; as she is sick a little she gets it. Mr. and Mrs. H. went for a walk up the creek a little ways and he shot two turtle doves and a smaller bird. If I had a shot gun where I get one bird with the rifle I might easily get five or six with the gun. Some wild ducks have come down the creek and a man camped above us got three the other day with his gun.

I hope you will have a good time now for a while. You have worked so hard for so long. I should not think you would have to work very much now, with the rent, int. etc. you ought to have nearly enough to keep a goin. I won't cost much now, my board and room I get and clothes are cheap that I wear. By the way, "we-uns" got the maple sugar you sent. It was delicious, extravagant, dumfounding, etc. Len liked it terrible. Did the people pay the whole years rent in advance, if they did it's a bargain. How many Tokologys did you have left. I won't need the shirts you spoke of now, I kinda long for them though when I hear the color. I am all right for socks etc. I think I will have my shoes half soled and nailed when I am in Prescott also get a pair of overalls. (And some thing else I wish.)

Good night
Lovingly,
STUART SHERMAN.

Mr. H. was so hurried to-day that he did not have time to write but will by next mail. I think if you don't care I'll get a gun in Prescott. I can get the money.

One more letter from Stuart gives us glimpses of him as a huntsman and as a chivalrous brother.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)
Thornes ranch,
May 3, 1894.

DEAREST LITTLE MOTHER,

I got a letter from you forwarded from Skull Valley. Mrs. Hubbs got one too. She says she will write in a few days. I think if I had been in the room when the teacher slapped Kate's face I would have gotten up and hit that teacher such a crack across

the face as she never felt before or ever will after. I expect John is having a fine time now. I rode Kate the saddle horse into town the other day. I had a fine ride about 12 or 14 miles.

I wish you could have some of the rabbit and quail we shoot. We have had all we could stuff of game since we came here. Mr. H. may go to show some party the iron mines in a few days. We are having fine weather here. We are camped under a big box-elder tree. "I'm tired now and sleepy too, just tuck me in my little bed."

Your loving son,
STUART SHERMAN.

He does not mention to his mother the family of eleven rattlesnakes which he killed with the new shotgun. But he kept the rattles as trophies.

Stuart's later letters from Arizona have been lost; but their place is taken in part by a narrative of the expedition which Mrs. Hubbs wrote more than twenty-five years later for Mrs. Sherman. The first part of Mrs. Hubbs's story supplements the letters at a number of points; the latter part gives an account of the severest test of physical strength and of character which Stuart had to face.

"Stuart grew strong, living out of doors. One of his duties was rounding up the two old horses, which were turned out to hunt their own feed. Once a day grain was put out near the tent so as to keep them from wandering too far. Their front legs were also loosely hobbled to help deter them from straying. When they failed to show up, Stuart would find their trail and hunt till he found them, when he would mount one without any saddle or method of guiding except a rope he carried, [and] ride it home while the other followed. Once he was gone almost all night; the six men who formed the mining crew were all out looking in different directions hunting him when he came galloping in, just before dawn. He had walked over thirty miles and ridden back without food since his breakfast the day before.[4] . . .

. . . ."There was little leisure and not a book in the camp. One day Stuart found a torn copy of one of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth's novels. He read it with avidity, and pronounced

[4]An omitted paragraph tells the lynx story.

it without exception the best book he had ever read. Recalling my own delight in surreptitious reading of *The Fireside Companion* at the same age, I was only amused. However, I told him that, while she was one of the most popular of writers, she had no standing as an artist, and that I would not enjoy reading the book. He was insistent to know the reason. I remember I took up the book and read aloud a page, rather cruelly overemphasizing the blunders in English, also the vain repetitions. When I stopped he said, 'Yes, I see now what you mean. She says the same thing over and over again,' and then added with more than a hint of his later caustic style, 'And it was hardly worth telling the first time.' Later, in recalling this incident, I have often felt that I was present at the birth of a critic.

"One of the prospects was too far from the water to work with sluicing or panning, so the dirt was put through a dry washer. Stuart used to turn the handle which operated it,—light work, but monotonous. I often took the baby and talked with him while he worked, occasionally trading jobs with him, for one of us had to keep a constant eye on the baby. . . .

"One day after I had told Stuart every personal tale of my own childhood I could recall, I began the story of *David Copperfield*. His insistence on every detail made the telling of it rival Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* in length. Then followed *Pendennis*, *Henry Esmond*, *Oliver Twist*, and finally *Les Misérables*. The only demand Scheherazade made of the Sultan was, under pretense of not remembering 'where she was,' that at the beginning of the next session he should repeat the story 'so far' in general. Twenty-five years afterward, when I met Stuart again, he told me that the characters in those stories were not only clearer to him than any he had ever read, but that they seemed more real than many people he had known for years. He also said that when he had to take a college examination years later, he did not have to read the book, I think it was *Les Misérables*, at all. I can still see the bright eyes brimming with tears at the sorrows of Fantine, the gusto to his turning the crank when the saintly nun told the lies for Jean Valjean. At times in his absorption the handle would go more and more slowly, to stop when the narrator stopped also.

"Another thing he learned, never to forget, was the table of Troy measures. Twice daily in the accurate assay scales we

weighed the gatherings of gold. It had all the excitement, so dear to all boys, of a race. The results varied from 19¢ to $40.00 one glorious morning when, after a hard storm which had swept the creek to bed rock, Stuart found a dozen or more good-sized nuggets, and the sand sweepings gave a little over $40.00. We had high hopes then of finding the source of supply, but never did and finally moved on again. This time to the Skull Valley district, where every drop of water had to be carried four miles. The nearest post-office was Capper Basin Wash. One day a letter came for us addressed to 'The Copper Washbasin,' Arizona, and was duly delivered, to the intense amusement of the boy.

"In answer to a telegram received at Prescott some weeks later, my husband hurriedly went by train to Williams, leaving me to sell the team, dispose of the camping outfit, and follow later with the two children. It was the time of the serious financial stringency of 1893. Camp outfits and horses were a drug on the market at Prescott, so we decided to drive the team through to Williams, where we hoped to get some of the $300.00 it had cost less than a year before.

"The month was September; the summer had been unusually hot and dry, even for this land. We consulted nobody, but started on a plain trail which soon became indistinct. Crossing the first mountain range we were often compelled to clear the road of branches and stones. The grade was steep, and the horses soon began to show the need of water. Our disappointment was great to find that the wells marked on the maps had gone dry when we finally reached them. We made an early start the next morning, but the poor animals were unable to make the grade with the heavy wagon. We were five hours making two miles. Then the real seriousness of the situation became evident to me. I calculated we must be over half way there, and there was a chance there was water in the remaining portion, so decided to push ahead. We took out the heavy trunk, tools, and camp outfit, retaining only the food and the pitifully small remains of the water left in the canteen. Before starting in the morning I had given the children each a drink. Both wanted more, but I explained we must be careful of the little we had till we came to the river, which we would surely reach before night. Stuart noticed I took none myself, but said very

little at the time. We toiled on all day, making only a few miles by night. The heat and dust were terrible and our sufferings intense. The next morning we abandoned the wagon and mounted the horses, getting off at the hills and leading the poor animals with difficulty. We would walk a few rods and then sink down. Finally the horses became unmanageable, and we let them go, knowing they would find water if it was to be found.

"When I gave the children almost the last of the water, dividing it equally between them, my poor baby, used to an almost exclusively liquid diet, drank his share crying bitterly for more. Then I saw an exhibition of bravery I have never seen equaled. Stuart gave his share of water to my baby. No one who has not known the torture of real thirst can comprehend what this meant. Almost any mother would have gone without to save her child, but Stuart was only a child himself, and I am quite sure my baby would not have survived had it not been for Stuart's sacrifice.

"The next morning the baby was unconscious and Stuart was delirious. Time and time again I held him by main force from leaving the trail for the lakes he saw in the distance. We staggered on till finally I too saw water in the distance. At first I feared the desert madness had me also in its grip, but it proved to be the Gila River. Neither of us could speak, owing to the inflamed condition of our throats, but I laid the baby down in a shallow pool and we walked into the water to our waists, letting the skin absorb all the water it could before we did more than dampen our lips. Then we drank heartily, and fell asleep from exhaustion.

"Hunger tormented Stuart the next morning; small wonder, as we had had no food for forty-eight hours. But hunger can be borne, and we traveled another day with a full canteen. The coyotes, which abounded in that region, came closer as we lay on the bare ground with no cover. I was afraid to go to sleep, and several times made rushes toward them during the night, when they would slink away, but soon I would see their eyes shining in the darkness. It was a long night. Toward morning, I climbed a little rise in one of my sorties and saw the headlight of an engine. We started as soon as we could see to walk, and about noon reached Seligman, about seventy miles west of the town we had headed for. Good Samaritans took us in. The baby

revived surprisingly after a drink of milk. Neither Stuart nor I could eat solid food that day, but made a good breakfast the next morning. I remember I changed a twenty dollar gold piece to pay for it. It was one of several I had with me, all of which I would gladly have given two days before for one table spoon full of water. We took the morning train for Williams, and within a few days Stuart left to rejoin his mother, who had in the meantime gone back to the old family home in Vermont."

Stuart's career as a gold miner lasted for between seven and eight months: he left Los Angeles in January, 1894, and the expedition came to its almost disastrous end in August.[5] The person best qualified to judge of the effect of Stuart's experience is his mother, who says, "It made a man of him." She does not mean, of course, that he now passed prematurely out of boyhood; his letters to her are sufficient proof of the contrary. But he gained an independence, a self-confidence, and a resourcefulness which many a boy does not attain in ten years at home. He gained too from the rough outdoor life, the hard work, and the good food a physical strength and vigor extraordinary at his age—a strength so far above the average that he always treated it as inexhaustible. Mr. Hubbs was substantially right, moreover, about the progress of his education. All his associates were his teachers, consciously or otherwise. Mrs. Hubbs's stories of good books, told while he turned the crank of the dry washer, were a better course in literature than most boys get in high school. The practical wisdom and instruction of Mr. Hubbs were no doubt equally valuable. "Mr. Pete" and Mike and the other miners unconsciously gave him an understanding of working men and an interest in them which persisted throughout his life and helped to determine the course of his thinking. Nine years later he wrote to Dean Clark of the University of Illinois, with whom he was corresponding about a position: "You ask me to tell you something about how I have increased my 'knowledge of the world.' I think my first great enlightenment came at the age of thirteen. Thinking at the time that I had acquired all the information from books that was necessary for an educated man, I begged to be allowed to leave school in Los Angeles and to go with a neighbor on a

[5]Mrs. Hubbs, writing a quarter of a century later, says September, but Dr. Pratt's diary shows that Stuart arrived in Dorset August 28th.

'prospecting' excursion to Arizona. In the seven months that I spent in Yavapai County I learned about mines and miners, wild cats, cactus, Hell's Cañon, Skull Valley, starvation, thirst, guns, and railroad strikes." He came to Vermont with a rather low opinion of book learning, as befitted a pupil of Mr. Hubbs, but with a mind intensely alert, active, and unspoiled.

CHAPTER IV

VERMONT SCHOOLBOY

ON AUGUST 28, 1894, Parson Pratt of Dorset wrote in his diary: "The event of the A. M. was the arrival of Stuart Pratt Sherman from Arizona. Left Williams at 1 A. M. Friday. He found his mother at the Holleys who probably gave him a hearty welcome and breakfast and dinner at the Gilberts." The trip across the continent alone was a great adventure for a twelve-year-old boy—even for one who had mined gold and nearly died of thirst in the Arizona desert. Stuart carried with him on the train (for protection, as he afterward loved to relate) the trusty shotgun which he had bought in Prescott. According to the testimony of a Vermont schoolteacher who afterward knew him pretty well, he arrived at Dorset "in a rather unkempt condition."

The change of environment was about as complete as can well be imagined—from the cactus and sagebrush of the Arizona mesas and arroyos to the green forested mountains of Vermont; from the rough comradeship of the mining camp to the sedate life of a New England village, where a considerable proportion of the inhabitants seemed to be his uncles, aunts, and cousins; from hunting and riding across the desert to attending the village school. We have no record of the Western grandson's first impressions of New England, but it seems safe to conjecture that they were not altogether favorable.

From the first, however, he must have felt the spell of the noble mountains that surround Dorset—the massive rampart of Equinox, the perfect symmetry of Green Peak, the remote and lonely beauty of Dorset Hollow, where the great mountains seem gathered round to guard some secret of their own. He must soon have been attracted to the quarries on Green Peak, where the pure white marble is cut out in huge blocks. Marble is so common in Dorset that the foundations of barns are built of it. An entry in Stuart's diary in the summer of 1920 mentions

visits to several of these mountains among experiences which developed his "taste for the wild."

Such excursions were doubtless limited, however, by the demands of the village school, which opened a few days after Stuart's arrival. The instruction was probably not of a very high order. The chief family reminiscence of Stuart's school experience concerns a teacher who in a physiology lesson "would hold out her hand in which lay an imaginary eye, and ask, 'If Oi had an oi in my hand, could the oi see?'" But there were compensations. A lively company of youngsters from the west road, including several Gilbert cousins, attended the school. These cousins had been rather strictly brought up, but their minds were open to new ideas. Stuart taught them to play cards (a thing previously unknown in their family) in the seclusion of the hayloft. One of these cousins, Anna, was good at arithmetic and very helpful in showing how to solve hard problems. Another, Huntington, was a singer, and with Stuart and his two sisters formed an amateur quartet.

Stuart found his grandfather, too, surprisingly sympathetic. Within a week after his arrival, Mr. Pratt's diary records, "Stuart came over from his mother's and the Holleys' and began some work on the henhouse, etc. Took my old typewriter & is refitting it for service." And a few days later: "Drove with Stuart to Manchester to get shells for his shotgun. Found desired style at Hard's drugstore." A grandfather who recognizes your interest in typewriters by presenting you with one, not the less valued because in need of minor repairs, and who makes a special trip to Manchester to find the right sort of shells for your shotgun, is the right sort of grandfather.

He found plenty of scope for his spare energy on his grandfather's place, working at jobs in which Mr. Pratt generally collaborated. A few typical entries in the diary follow:

Sept. 6, 1894. Stuart & I finished up a sugar bbl. silo for hens next winter (if it will keep).

Oct. 6, 1894. Stuart picked apples for Tom Collins and near a bbl. for me—Baldwins.

Nov. 8, 1894. Got in some wood, but we (Stuart & I) were overpowered by fall of the whole pile upon our heads—my bruises on face conspicuous.

Nov. 19, 1894. With Stuart's help put outside windows on N. side.

Nov. 24, 1894. Stuart offers to help get out manure to-day and we got out 5 or 6 loads for meadow, garden & front lawn.

In the spring the boy tapped some maples and boiled down the sap for maple sugar; he burned brush in the garden with such zeal that he started a grass fire and made it necessary to give an alarm; he shot a cat which had been threatening the young chickens. An interesting summer job was cleaning out the well. The diary says:

July 22, 1895. Helped Stuart clean parsonage well. After drawing 60 or 80 pails he proposed to go to the bottom. I let him down in the bucket. He scooped up several pails of mud and water & at length came up himself in the bucket. Got prospect of improved water for the family.

In connection with this adventure Stuart's sister Katherine recalls a later one which suggests that Stuart's practical knowledge was sometimes not equal to his zeal. "Years afterward," she says, "when Stuart was in Dorset, he cleaned the cistern at grandfather's house, and he tried to patch it up with commercial fertilizer (which looks like cement but doesn't have the same effect)."

A year's trial made it clear that the Dorset village school had not much to give Stuart; and in the fall of 1895 his mother decided to send him with his cousins Huntington and Anna Gilbert to Troy Conference Academy at Poultney, twenty miles to the north. This was an old-fashioned New England academy for boys and girls, founded under the auspices of the Methodist Church. At the time Stuart went there the school had two buildings situated on a rather large and very pretty campus, with an athletic field adjoining. There were about a hundred and fifty pupils. Poultney is a village considerably larger than Dorset, the centre of a slate-quarrying district. There are mountains to the east and southeast, not so high as those around Dorset, but steeper and more ruggedly carved. To the south, Lake St. Catherine winds among wooded hills; a few miles to the north is the larger but less picturesque Lake Bomoseen.

Stuart went on nutting excursions and picnics among the hills and greatly enjoyed fishing in the lakes. When he returned to Dorset for visits in later years, he liked to renew these experiences. "My cousin Huntington and I went on a fishing trip over night to Bomoseen; got some 35 perch, bass and pickerel,"[1] he wrote to a friend in the summer of 1907.

The surroundings of the school were delightful, and its equipment was probably as good as that of the average small New England academy. But the standards of scholarships were not very high, and much of the teaching was second or third rate. Latin and Greek, indeed, according to the testimony of one of Stuart's contemporaries, were thoroughly and well taught. But Stuart did not intend to go to college and took no courses in the classics. He made an excellent record in his studies; all his grades except in declamation, a required subject which apparently did not interest him, were in the nineties. Anyone looking over the list of his courses might suppose they had been selected by a lad of strongly scientific tastes. Besides the required subjects—grammar, composition, algebra, etc.—he took courses in physics, astronomy, physical geography, geology, and zoölogy. The only foreign language he studied was German, for two terms of his second year. This and a one-term course in English classics make up the sum of his literary and linguistic studies at Poultney. He seems to have received some encouragement from the praise of his composition teacher, Mr. Charles Lee; but in general his courses and teachers at Troy Conference Academy left little permanent impression upon him. "He was a good student," says his friend Wellington Aiken, "and rather scornful of some of his teachers."

He was not quite fourteen when he went to Poultney with his cousin Huntington, who was nearly five years older. What most impressed Huntington about him was his independence. Most of the boys at the school were several years his seniors, yet he easily held his own among them and was determined to do things his own way. Still a sturdy Westerner, he was nicknamed by the boys "Arizona Pete." He seemed to feel no need of following the crowd. Wellington Aiken, his most intimate friend at Poultney, remembers him as "quick in thought and speech, independent in views, ready with scornful boyish in-

[1]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, July 5, 1907.

tolerance even of his friends, equally ready in regretful compunction for any injustice, fun-loving, with a taste for practical jokes, but more responsive to a challenging idea than to anything else, honest and decent-minded always."

The most valuable training he got at the school was outside the curriculum. "The Trojan Literary Society," says Wellington Aiken, "one of the two active and sometimes bitter rivals in school life, offered Stuart his chief early literary forum.[2] The weekly program consisted among other items of a formal debate, the reading of the weekly paper, the *Trojan Star*, and a half extemporary dramatic number, usually farcical. Into all this Stuart threw himself with enthusiasm. I recall, not his arguments, but his fire and earnestness of debate on capital punishment, the tariff, and other sufficiently ambitious subjects. I recall his clever arrangement of a pantomime version of Lowell's 'The Courtin'.' And I remember the glee with which he introduced into the pages of the *Star*, contrasting startlingly with the usual school news, 'grinds' on fellow students, essays, and verse, a negro charm for curing corns. Especially I recall the astonishment of his audience—it was at the annual 'public' program—as he began in a sepulchral tone:

> "'Go pare yo' cawn in de dew of de mawn
> With a blade dat's shaved de daid!'

"We took the Trojan Society very seriously in those days. It is futile to attempt to weigh youthful influences; but weekly forensic and literary effort before one's own irreverent contemporaries is not to be ignored."

In a letter to his small brother John, Stuart describes his part in one of the less serious assemblies of the society.

"The other night we had a joint meeting of the Zeta-Betas (girls) and the Trojan Societies. I had a quartette—composed of one member of the Zeta-Betas: a girl from up street: Prof. Harris, and your servant. We sang once, and were encored, and sang again. Then I had the Trojan paper and I had lots of fun reading it. I had one article with several characters represented in it; one was a football player who is on our team, one was a

[2] "He joined the Trojans," says Huntington Gilbert, "chiefly, I think, because I belonged to the other one."

professor, and three were ghosts from the underworld who had come up at midnight to seize the football team for their sins. Of the ghosts one was George Washington, one was a 'Greasy Grind' who died young of looking out the window with his hat off, and the third was an Anxious Mother. I impersonated all the characters as I read, now lisping and talking Bostonian, now thundering majestic, now screaming and scolding like a crack-voiced shrew. The performance seemed to please my audience a good deal. They applauded and stamped, and laughed so uproariously that I had to stop at about every third sentence to allow the tumult to abate. . . . I was in a fair way to need a new and larger hat, or would have been, had I not been thinking all the time what geese they were to laugh at such ranting rot."

Stuart was free to make fun of the football team, because he was one of its members, and in his second year its manager. His friend Wellington Aiken writes:

"I am not sure, after all, but that the most vivid picture of Stuart Sherman that comes to me will always be his set and eager face as a charging end on the school football team. It flashed before me when I took up the morning paper and saw the news of his tragic death. He was both light and young for that particular team, which was made up before the days when schools examined eligibility rules too closely. (Indeed I believe the coach took book-keeping, to qualify as a student, and played full-back.) The strategy of the game was then as simple as that of a battering-ram or a steam roller. Small wonder that I recall Stuart's wild rush as he flung his 130 pounds against a huge charging back with an utter disregard of the physics of motion, and a rapt singleness of purpose that brought them both down in a cluttered heap."

In the less organized activities of the students, also, Stuart took a lively interest. He reacted vigorously against what Professor Aiken calls "the type of religion most affected at the school," and in general against the official code. Perhaps the chief value of a prescribed state or school religion is that it provokes people to rebel and think for themselves. Stuart and his friends held long discussions of religious and moral questions from the point of view of nonconformists and rebels.

This nonconformist attitude was not confined to theory.

The academy had, Professor Aiken says, "an elaborate set of rules, positive and negative, for the guidance of questing youth. . . . A little group of four of us, including Stuart, of course, made up a sort of informal club, whose unavowed purpose was the unobtrusive but efficient evasion of certain prohibitions. Among these, the rules against burning a light after ten o'clock, cooking in our rooms, and playing cards, by adroit management could all be broken at once. The accepted custom was thus: when silence and the dark had lulled the hall teacher into misguided and drowsy security as to his charges, tiptoeing on stocking feet along the silent corridor the four of us would gather at the chosen room—usually that of my brother and myself. Here having heavily draped door and windows with bed blankets against any revealing ray, we would light the smoky student lamp, put the cocoa on the oil stove, set the oysters frying, produce sugar, bread and butter conveyed in surreptitious napkins from the supper table, then having consumed the comestibles, seat ourselves for two hours of euchre or whist. Sometimes cider brought in innocent appearing oil cans, or grapes unknowingly contributed by some citizen, crowned the feast.

"These unauthorized entertainments were of course rumored among the students, with youthful embellishments. The general feeling was one of sympathy, but certain youths who were understood to be studying for the ministry did not approve. It was one of these who christened our group 'The Bummy Club.' It was another, older and graver, who took it upon himself to reform our ways, especially as to the sin of card playing. I remember vividly Stuart's retort:

"'It's a good game. Do you know anything about it? Did you ever play? Then how do you ——Here. Sit down there and I'll prove it to you!'

"In a second he had the cards on the table, and by his audacity almost brought his solemn critic to take a hand. But the laughter of the boys standing about dissolved the spell.

". . . We had our own methods of cutting chapel, and dodging Sunday service, and avoiding the much-detested 'Bible Study' on Sunday afternoon. We also had our exits and entrances by porch roof or laundry window for late night or early morning prowling. Our social contact with the girls was supposed to be

rigidly supervised, but I have still a snapshot of a group of eight boys and girls in obviously high spirits taken beside a woodland stream far from teacher or chaperone, with Stuart Sherman smiling conspicuously in the front row."

Meantime the academy records show that Stuart was receiving high grades for deportment—100 in one term, 99 in another. It would appear that the Bummy Club technique for evading rules must have been highly developed and that the disapproving young divinity students must have been pretty good sports.

At week-ends or holidays Stuart and his cousin Huntington sometimes rode their wheels twenty-five miles over the hilly country road to visit their families in Dorset. Grandfather Pratt's diary records several such visits. On one of these occasions he notes: "Stuart brings in some of his school papers at my request. He seems to have the pen of a ready writer." Sometimes after the Trojan Society meeting on Friday night Stuart accepted an invitation to drive with the Aiken boys to their home sixteen miles to the north. This would be pleasanter than the bicycle ride to Dorset, since they would make the trip with a hired horse and buggy. Professor Aiken vividly recalls "those long dark drives; the silent streets of the old town, the glimmer of fireflies along Hampton flats, the dark woods along the hilly roads where the buggy plunged down the gloom of a ravine till the horse's hoofs suddenly thundered on the loose planks of the river bridge, and finally the haven of the old farmhouse, where at two in the morning three boys, ravenous from boarding-school fare and the night drive, foraged the pantry for such light viands as cold roast pork, doughnuts, and mince pie—which did not in the least dull our appetites for sausage and buckwheat cakes and syrup at breakfast."

An undated letter of this period from Stuart to his brother John, already quoted in part, gives a pleasant glimpse of him as the elder brother away at school.

DEAR JOHN,

You little Rat, you write a corking good letter, did you know it? Well, it's an undisputed fact. You don't want to put on any airs about it though for it runs in the family.—You get it from your mother. . . .

Speaking of Fairs and Irish Fairs, and Irish Fare—(Mama mentioned some of your witticisms in her last letter)—they had a fair over in Fair Haven (about six miles from here) last week and a good many of the fellows and girls went over. Well, I tho't the names made good punning material, so the last thing Friday afternoon before the meeting while I still had my football suit on I sat down and wrote the following verses for my paper:

"O where are you going, my pretty maid?"
"I go to Fair Haven, kind sir," she said.
"Sweet maid, I pray thee, why goest thou there?"
"I go, good sir, for to see the fair."
"Then tarry, O tarry, sweet maiden," said he,
"For there's no Fairer Haven than right here with thee,
Thou art fair, and Fair Haven, and Heavenly fair;
Heaven bless thee, fair maiden, we're *already there.*"

Well, this is a long drawn out scrawl and it's high time I commenced some less pleasant task than writing to my cheerful, well-behaved, obliging, good-natured, respectful, good, studious, brilliant young fraternal relative, so au revoir,

STUART.

In the summer of 1896, after Stuart's first year at Troy Conference Academy, Mrs. Sherman accepted a position as matron at the school, and early in September she moved with her family to Poultney. Stuart's younger sister and brother now entered the academy, and the importance of setting a good example may have somewhat limited his activities in the Bummy Club. His older sister Persis was teaching this fall in a country school, and to her he wrote somewhat in the strain of Laertes to Ophelia. The reader will notice his cautious allusions to literary ambition.

(*To Persis Sherman*)

DEAR PUSS,

I liked your last letter very much because there was so much humanity in it. Things aren't worth much anyway—it's only what we *think* of things that amounts to much in this world—

in this good nonchalant world of ours that runs right along minding its own business and not caring a hoot, or stopping a minute to dispute whatever we may say against it. I'm glad you feel the bliss of present content—that takes the shine off all anticipation or reminiscence. I don't really see how you could feel otherwise though. It's great to be able to earn your own living, and I feel some small measure of content in thinking that I am working all I can here. Work is, after all, the most precious and indispensable thing that the good God has committed into our charge, and we can never taste the full sweetness of rest and sleep except we have toiled.

Sometime the Shermans are all going to take a vacation, and know what it means to have a *right* to do nothing, but the younkers have got to work first. I think this little dream of bachelor hall is a very pretty little scheme too. Boston is the place, isn't it? I've set my heart on Boston, because down in Boston, you know, they like the things they ought to like and don't run mad over some modern monstrosity which they live to condemn in cooler hours. (This is what I hear.) And we would go to operas and hear fine lectures, and "hang out" for hours and hours in the library, and maybe meet one or two people of brains that wrote or played or did something else in a very extraordinary way of excellence. But I am not quite clear what it is you are going to do there—is it teaching still? I shall teach of course unless I can do something on a paper or something else which it would make the god thwart me if I should mention. What you can do is the real thing. As Kipling reminds us "Inclination doesn't necessarily imply power." So we shall all do what we can do best, and with old Paul endeavor therewith to be content.

But, mind you, I'm not going to have any flirtations in bachelor's hall. It lowers the august air of the place. And therefore according to what I hear you will have to bring about an immense change in your career. . . .

Well, well, I'll have to chop off. It's just about noon but I'm so sleepy I can hardly hold my eyes open, for we played football in Rutland yesterday and the game, driving, training, talking, shouting, singing, etc. have wearied me excessively. Then I have a more or less burdensome correspondence to look after which my capacity of manager has entailed upon me. (How

mad it used to make me when —— wrote me in her letter that she was sleepy, but you are not I and I am not ——).

So au revoir,
STUART SHERMAN.

Poultney, Vermont,
Sunday.

Grandfather Pratt's diary notes that Stuart had a minor illness during the Christmas holidays, and a more serious one—malaria—in March, 1897. Under his mother's care, however, he recovered promptly, and as his sister remembers signalized his return to health by eating a whole muffin tin of popovers.

The family spent the summer at Round Lake, New York. In August Mrs. Sherman decided to move to Williamstown, chiefly because of the educational advantages which would be open to her sons there.

CHAPTER V

FINDING HIMSELF IN BOOKS

IN SEPTEMBER, 1897, the Sherman family moved from Dorset to Williamstown and took a small house on Cole Avenue, near the corner of Main Street. They brought into that staid college town a touch of color and contrast like that which the first crimson maple brings to one of its hillsides in the fall. All the Sherman children had their shares of the family talent and charm. For the young people of the village, at least, life at once became perceptibly more interesting.

Stuart, then not quite sixteen, entered the junior class of the Williamstown High School. The writer met him at this time. He was a big, handsome, dark-eyed boy, unusually attractive and versatile, a natural athlete, a good singer, a clever actor, a brilliant student. He at once took a prominent place in school activities. He played at tackle on the football team; as a member of the track team he threw the hammer and put the shot. In his senior year the track team won the championship in the Williams interscholastic meet; and a picture of this victorious team, including an excellent likeness of Stuart, still hangs in the club room of the high school. He was fond of tennis and played a fairly good game. He helped to organize a debating society, modeled more or less after the Trojan Society, and not very happily christened the Fratrogermanic. Being the best actor in the school, he was naturally drafted for leading parts in class and school plays.

He was quite aware, of course, of his ability in these directions, but he was not in the least bumptious or conceited. No one felt that he was making an effort to shine; he seemed remarkably free from vanity and self-assertion. This was the more surprising because his family, according to Williamstown notions, had a tendency to spoil him. One of his friends, an observant young lady, said: "In our family we never paid any

particular attention to what the boys said; we just went right on talking. But in the Sherman family, we noticed that as soon as Stuart opened his mouth to say anything, the others all stopped and listened." This treatment ought theoretically to have turned him into a young prig. What saved him, probably, was the fact that in his Arizona experience he had come to grips with reality and had learned to measure himself by standards much more severe than those which were likely to be applied to him either by his family or by his schoolmates.

The Williamstown High School at the time Stuart entered it was small; there were perhaps sixty-five or seventy pupils. The equipment was by modern standards very inadequate, but the teaching was of high quality, especially in the classics and in English. Some of the ablest among the recent graduates of Williams, including the salutatorian of one class and the valedictorian of another, were on the faculty. Until shortly before coming to Williamstown, Stuart had not intended to go to college, and he had not begun the study of Latin. Partly through the influence of his aunt Harriet (Mrs. F. E. Hopkins), who took a lively interest in the education of her nephews and nieces, he now set out to remedy this deficiency, and with the aid of an excellent teacher, Walter Foster, he completed the four years' work required for entrance to college in two years. A passage in a letter to his sister Persis, written a couple of years later, gives a pleasant glimpse of this teacher as he appeared to Stuart. The letter gives an account of a high school reunion banquet. "Mr. Foster as toast-master was reproachless and unique. I couldn't help thinking as he told about his youthful note-book with the verse and the notes, and the pressed flowers, about the apple-seeds that cracked on the hearth and revealed the future 'dearest'—I couldn't help thinking of the Abbé Constantin.—He was as graceful and modest as—himself, to be sure. He doesn't seem to worry much about the identity of W. E. Foster."

Stuart took also two years of German, a year of geometry, and a year of English; the English and the second year of German in the classes of another remarkable teacher, Grosvenor B. Hill. "German is glorious," he wrote to Persis, who was now living with Mrs. Hopkins in Springfield and attending

school there. "I glory in it more and more every day. We have read books by the three greatest German authors this year."[1] The same letter mentions going on a straw sleigh ride, attending choir rehearsals with his sister Katherine, and sending a valentine. It will be remembered that Persis ("Daisy") was his special childhood companion and playmate. He wrote to her with rather slangy boyish abandon, teasing her unmercifully about her admirers (the "little blazes" or "candles"), and stringing out nonsense, as he would say, as fast as it came into his head.

At this time, and as long as she lived in Williamstown, Mrs. Sherman supported her family by keeping a boarding house for college students, and Stuart helped her by waiting on table, freezing ice cream and doing the various chores which fall to the lot of the son of the household. The next letter alludes to these activities.

(*To Persis Sherman*)

Oct. 2, 1898.

DEAR PUSS,

Midst death and tears I look around, life seems a white and inky sea, yet midst the books I clear the ground, and write a letter Sis to thee.

O ye little fishes and gods! de niggers on dis yeah plantation done got a hustle on, I tell you honey,

Our list of gentlemen grubbers has run up to seventeen or eighteen now, and "it is a case" of worn sole leather to feed their gaping bills. Speaking of bills reminds me and doubtless you also of the singular number, which is of course Bill. . . .

As to the rest of the little "blazes" I can't seem to recall their names. Suppose you make out a directory the next time you are here, with the full names and addresses, then I can keep you posted. . . .

Forgive me and this awful spatter for mercy sake Amen. With fraternal adoration,

Yours,
STUART.

[1]Letter of February 15, 1898.

The next one is concerned largely with German and football.

(*To Persis Sherman*)

Nov. 1898.

Dear Sis:

. . . I suppose you know we have been playing football some this fall. We beat our first game, by the way, up in Hoosick Falls. This football practise of course takes lots of time, we are out every night for it. Which by the way reminds me I am going to write another volume of verse entitled *Foot-Ball Yells*, or *Touch-downs*, I haven't quite decided which. This is to be the companion piece for my *Swine Notes*.

. . . You spoke of *Der Fluch der Schönheit*. I have often spoken about it, but have never read it. About a month ago, I borrowed a copy of it which G—— owns, and it is on my table now to be read sometime to "fill-up-the-gap." At present there is no gap. You know I am taking German this year. They use different text-books so of course it is a gain for me. We have Mr. Hill to teach that study this year, and he is, as I have pointed out, a Star. Last year we had Miss——, who was a feline and *not* a star, even spelled with a small letter. She took a hard classic and soaked us three or four pages, very soon after we had begun, and along later in the year ten pages. That was considerable. Hill seems to have some sense, and his class, his second year class whose infancy he had no hand in training, has *no sense* nor knowledge of German. So he gives them only about a page and a half of a little novel about as hard as the Curse of Beauty. *Der Fluch* isn't very hard, but so much depends on the teacher that it is difficult for me to say at this distance whether your instructor has sense or not. I shall therefore leave that for you to decide. I suppose I might open up a correspondence with him through the *Republican* and sort of sound him, as I have been doing with a man in North Adams, through the N.A. *Evening Herald*. The man was referee in a football game over there in the city and gave us such *decayed* decisions that we all waxed wrathy, and I wrote about a half a column for the paper telling him what an outlandish fool he was. He replied through the same medium and we may meet again.

I am sorry that I can't tell you anything of consequence about the *candles* here in Will-Ville, . . .

Well if I string this string out any longer the front will be still more disconnected with the rear than it is now, to your agony and my reproach. Therefore *Auf wieder schreiben.*

deinem lieblichen Bruder,
STUART.

Stuart Sherman's first appearance in controversial journalism was thus in the sporting columns, as a critic of an objectionable referee.

The years at the Williamstown High School determined the bent of Stuart's mind and the general direction of his later development. The decisive influence came chiefly from the course in English literature which he took in his senior year, and from the admirable teacher who conducted it, Grosvenor B. Hill. In an address entitled "Shaping Men and Women,"[2] given at Detroit before a gathering of teachers, Stuart explained how this influence was exerted.

"As a high school boy, I had one teacher who, I still think, was very nearly an ideal one. . . .

"He was, in passing, a fine scholar, valedictorian of his class in college. But that is not the point. I have seen plenty of valedictorians who did not thrill me. He taught me what little Greek I know, but that is not much, for I gave him only a year to do it. In the classroom, he was a strenuous drill master, and kept us all on our toes with excitement, as if we were playing tennis, very keen about Greek grammar and accents. But that is not the point either. He also drilled me on the notes in the back of the high school edition of *Macbeth*, yet *that* is not the point. . . .

"The point is that this teacher had in himself a white-hot love for fine things in literature, and whenever one touched him one took fire. That is just the whole secret in a nutshell.

"I remember one day he told us all—a senior high school class in English—to close our high school editions of *Macbeth*. Then without a word of comment he read us 'The Death of Socrates' from Jowett's Plato, read it with a kind of intensity and grave feeling, which made the conversation in the prison

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[2] *Michigan Education Journal*, February, March, April, May, 1926; reprinted in the volume of which it is the title essay, pp. 11-15.

house very real to us. I could hardly wait till the session was over to get hold of Jowett and read through the *Dialogues*.

"His most effective teaching, so far as I was concerned, was done in the five minutes between 4:00 and 4:05 in the afternoon, as I was passing by his desk on the way out of the classroom.

"He would stop me and say, 'Look here, Sherman, have you read the *Epithalamium* and the *Hymns* of Edmund Spenser?'

"And I would admit that I had not.

"'Ah,' he would exclaim, with a flash and a glow of remembered pleasure in his eyes, 'Ah, but I *envy* you reading those poems for the first time!' Then I would go and buy the works of Spenser and read him straight through, in a cheap little 35 cent edition, which I have to this day, and still prefer to any other, for the sake of my memory of first exploring there in search of the gusto I heard in that teacher's voice, in search of the glow I had seen in that teacher's eyes.

"Under the influence of these little fiery touches of enthusiasm between 4:00 and 4:05 in the afternoon, I read through while in high school the works of Spenser, of Keats, of Shelley, of Byron, of Tennyson, the whole works of Matthew Arnold, politics and theology included, Plato, Milton's *Areopagitica*, and some of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*. I remember those offhand as some of the books bought and read under that teacher's influence. There was no examination in any of these things, no 'credit' for reading. They were presented to me just as privileges and pleasures to be had for the taking; and so I took them. He discovered my appetite and liberated it. That was all there was to it.

"I date my first real awaking to the beauty of Greek literature in this way. One afternoon this teacher and a fellow teacher of his were standing in the school yard eating peanuts and watching our team play football. I happened to be standing near. As this teacher of mine shelled his peanuts, he said to the other teacher: 'Do you know, last night, Walter, I read themes till three in the morning. Then I wanted something to take the taste out of my mouth. And so I took down the *Antigone* of Sophocles and read it; and do you know, *it was so beautiful that I couldn't sleep.*'

"I overheard him saying that, you see, eating peanuts out on the football field, where it dropped from him just casually:

'It was so beautiful that I couldn't sleep.' He said it as if the memory of that beauty hurt him a little still, like a pleasure that is almost too perfect to be endured.

"I was willing to go a good way for a beauty that would not let me sleep; and so in my high school days I began to read Greek tragedies in translation, and to learn a little Greek just as fast as I could."

An entry in Stuart's diary for May 29, 1917, records more briefly the same feeling of gratitude. "Went to Brentano's and bought a copy of Arnold.[3] Took it to 65th St., High School of Commerce, to Grosvenor B. Hill, assistant principal, who first sent me to Arnold when he was teaching in the Wmstown High School. I recalled to him some of the other authors to whom he directed me in those days: Keats, Spenser, Hooker, Plato."

It is interesting to get a glimpse of Stuart from across the desk of the teacher who influenced him so deeply. Mr. Hill says: "His written work needed no signature; it was peculiar to him, since it was marked by felicitous and unexpected turns of phrase and thought. In recitation work the same thing appeared in his rather deliberate speech. He could and did say witty things in his slow quiet way.[4] He used the wit to clear up his own point of view as well as to show weakness in the position taken by others. He gave the impression that he was pondering about something. Often this thinking was marked by a sort of melancholy, though that may be too strong a term for it. This side did not show in recitation, but only in written work or in conversation with me at the desk.

"Those talks he seemed to enjoy, for he came often. . . . [Once] he poured out his feelings about the verse of Pope's Iliad which in those days was among the English requirements for college. He summed it all up by saying, 'The heroic couplet seems like a picket fence; each couplet is complete in itself, is like all the others and ends in a point.' This may or may not have been original with him, but it was characteristic of his keenness, his exuberant fancy, and his sense of humor. Most of

[3] *Matthew Arnold: How to Know Him* had just been published.

[4] Wellington Aiken remembers him as "quick in thought and speech," but this was to a school fellow outside the classroom. There is no real inconsistency; when he talked with Mr. Hill, Stuart stopped to think.

ST. JOHN FISHER COLLEGE LIBRARY

these conversations had to do with books that he read on his own initiative or by suggestion."

In his senior year, Stuart had his first experience on the blackboard side of the teacher's desk; he served as substitute teacher of Latin and English for three weeks. He probably enjoyed the novelty of his position, but there is no record of his feeling about it.

The senior English course covered the books required for college entrance. One of Mr. Hill's devices was to ask each member of the class, at the end of the year, to hand in a list of the books, arranged in the order of his preference. Stuart put "Paradise Lost" at the top of his list, but so did some of his classmates. He differed sharply from most of them in placing Pope's Iliad (in spite of his early acquaintance with it through hearing his father read it) at the bottom, and in the relatively high ranking he gave to Burke's "Speech on Conciliation," a work which most high school students, then as now, heartily disliked. Mr. Hill also asked his students to report their reading in poetry, whether done in school or not. Stuart's list of poets is a rather long one, including a number of writers seldom looked into by high school boys. Among the older poets he had got acquainted with Chaucer in the "Canterbury Tales," with Spenser in the "Shepherd's Calendar," and with Sidney in the Sonnets, and had ranged downward in time and poetic quality from these to Owen Meredith's "Lucile" and Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia".

At the opening of his senior year in high school, Stuart began to copy into notebooks passages from his reading that impressed him. Up to this point his reading, though much wider than that of most boys at his age, had been of a rather casual sort; now he seems to have begun reading more systematically. Six of these notebooks have been preserved, and they are of peculiar interest in showing not only what he read but what he thought important and memorable.

The first notebook, which is dated September 24–October 30, 1898, contains extracts from twenty-six writers, ranging from Homer to Whittier. Several of these are represented only by a passage or two, probably not quoted at first hand. But the quotations show clearly that in these five weeks Stuart read four of Shakespeare's plays, two of Chaucer's tales, the first

book of "Paradise Lost," Pope's "Essay on Criticism" and "Essay on Man," several of Bacon's essays, and Tennyson's "The Princess," besides sampling the work of a dozen other poets and essayists. The quotations are chosen for all sorts of reasons, but for epigrammatic quality or imaginative suggestiveness more often than any others. A considerable number are of the reflective-moral sort; one from the *Two Noble Kinsmen* makes a distinction which Stuart emphasized in his later critical writing: "As we are men, thus should we do; being sensually subdued, we lose our human title."

A notebook following this one has apparently been lost; the next of those which have survived covers approximately five months, January 29 to June 2, 1899. This shows Stuart continuing his reading of Shakespeare, and reading the last two books of "Paradise Lost" and the second book of the "Faëry Queene." (Probably he read the middle books of "Paradise Lost" and the first of the "Faëry Queene" between the end of October and January.) He explored the earlier part of the "Prelude," and made an excursion into Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, bringing back such specimens of the fruits of that land as: "The search for knowledge is a thing painful, and the painfulness of knowledge is that which maketh the will so hardly inclinable thereunto." One may suspect that he found the search for knowledge in Hooker, even though recommended by Mr. Hill, somewhat painful at this time. He read several of Lowell's critical essays and fell under the charm of Kipling's verse. But if we may judge by the amount of space given to the books it was the "Faëry Queene" which then appealed to him most strongly, partly for its imagery and music, partly for its moral reflections.

Scattered through the notebook is an interesting series of passages bearing on ambition and the strenuous quest for fame. Besides two from Virgil, there is Henry the Fifth's

> "But if it be a sin to covet honor,
> I am the most offending soul alive."

From the "Faëry Queene" there is this:

> "Abroad in arms, at home in studious kind,
> Who seeks with patient toil shall honor soonest find.

In woods, in waves, in wars, she wonts to dwell
And will be found with peril and with pain;
Ne can the man that moulds in idle cell
Unto her happy mansion attain;
Before her gate High God did Sweat ordain
And wakeful watches ever to abide."

And from the "Prelude":

"Youth should be awed, religiously possessed
With a conviction of the power that waits
On knowledge, when sincerely sought and prized
For its own sake, on glory and on praise
If but by labor won."

It is safe to say not only that ambition had taken hold of the boy who copied such lines as these, but that he had a sense, uncommon at his age, of the price that must be paid for "honor."

Reading of the sort just described, done with eager interest, can hardly fail to contribute toward progress in writing. A short theme which Stuart wrote in Mr. Hill's class, merely as an exercise in paragraph construction, will illustrate his increasing mastery of vocabulary and sentence form. Incidentally, the paragraph is characteristic in its attitude toward the quality it describes.

"The lazy man has some advantages over the active man after all. By lazy, be it understood, we mean thoroughly lazy—lazy in mind, body and soul. Not quick of spirit, and slow of flesh, not ready of intention and slothful in execution, not willing but unable, not a planner of never completed schemes—no—this is torment, purgatory, penal fires of unaccomplished purposes, the eternal curse of heads all cerebrum. The lazy man has no regrets, for he does nothing for the organ of regret to act upon. 'Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow' might seem at first glance to express the right idea, but still there is prospect of work, the looking ahead which is incompatible with the lazy man's disposition. He must not be lazy customarily and work by fits and starts—this is painful too, but he must be lazy to-day, and to-morrow, and the next day and the day after, and everlastingly lazy—too lazy to get

DR. PRATT'S CHURCH IN DORSET

up in the morning, too lazy to go to bed at night, too lazy to run up a hill, too lazy to hold himself back going down, too lazy to keep himself alive, and too lazy to die.

"Method—'Telling what a thing is not.' Selah."

In June, 1899, Stuart graduated from the high school as valedictorian of his class. He was heartily liked and admired by his classmates, but had made no intimate friends among them. One enduring friendship, with Homer Woodbridge, who graduated a year before him, began in high school, to ripen afterward in college and the graduate school; most of his associates at this period, however, including all the girls to whom he showed any special attention, were older than he. His unusual maturity made this perfectly natural.

At the time of his graduation he expected to enter college in the fall. An entry in his grandfather Pratt's diary for August 19, 1899, records a short visit from him, with the comment, "He is about to enter Williams College." But he had made up his mind that he wanted to learn Greek; he told Mr. Hill "that he would feel more self-respect if he entered college with that language."[5] Since beginning Greek was not then offered at Williams, he decided to take a year of postgraduate work at the high school and at the same time to prepare himself for examinations in freshman subjects in order to enter college as a sophomore in 1900. "He was put into a beginners' class," says Mr. Hill, "and in a month 'doubled' into an Anabasis class, and so did two years' work in one." He also took a beginning course in French.

Meantime a notebook, dated June to September, 1899, shows that he was reading enthusiastically during the summer vacation. There are many quotations from "Paradise Regained," which he evidently read through with relish; there are even more from "Don Juan," which he read immediately afterward as a "chaser." But the writer to whom the largest share of space is devoted is Kipling. This of course indicates only the normality of Stuart's taste. Nearly every youngster who cared for books was reading and memorizing Kipling in 1899. The passages that Stuart selected to quote, however, are not quite the usual ones. Consider these, for instance, from "Life's Handicap":

[5]Letter from G. B. Hill to Homer Woodbridge.

"If I were Job ten times over, I should be so interested in what was going to happen next that I'd stay on and watch."

"The depth and dream of my desire,
The bitter paths wherein I stray,
Thou knowest, Who hast made the Fire,
Thou knowest, Who hast made the clay.

"One stone the more swings to her place
In that dread temple of Thy worth—
It is enough that through Thy grace
I saw naught common on Thy earth."

Several of the passages quoted from "Paradise Regained," like those earlier cited from Spenser and others, are chosen apparently because they are expressive of a similar high purpose; Milton's combination of moral idealism with lofty ambition evidently made a strong appeal to the young anthologist. He selects this for instance:

"All my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things."

But he is equally attracted by passages of sheer beauty in "Paradise Regained," such as the one about "the herald lark" in Book II, and from Book IV

". . . till morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice grey,"

and the lines that follow. From "Don Juan" he selects several of the brilliant descriptive passages in Canto IV; evidently the Haidee episode appealed to him strongly. He comes back, however, to the Miltonic note in a quotation from Tennyson: "If a man is to be merely a bundle of sensations, he had better not exist at all. He should embark on his career in a spirit of selfless and adventurous heroism; should develop his true self by not

shirking responsibility." This note of high purpose, which he had heard in Virgil, in Spenser, in Milton, in Tennyson, even in Kipling, he had used as the central theme of his valedictory address when he graduated from the high school—"Life's Reveille."

Besides the Greek and French which he was studying at school in this year of postgraduate work (1899–1900), he was keeping vigorously at his German and Latin and was reading widely in English. Three notebooks which survive show what he was doing. The first, which covers the period from November to March, is devoted rather largely to quotations from German, French, and Latin writers. He read several works usually reserved for advanced college courses, such as Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and Cicero's *Cato Major* and *Laelius*. In English the author who appealed to him most intimately was Stevenson; he quotes copiously from *Virginibus Puerisque* on love and marriage, against prudence, in praise of energetic action, of not taking thought for health and safety, of death in the midst of happy achievement. Some of these passages, read now, have a curiously prophetic ring. "Lord look after his health, Lord have a care of his soul, says he; and he has at the key of the position." "In the hot-fit of life, atiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side." Stuart was attracted about equally by the generous spirit of these essays and by their stylistic flourish.

Several passages from different sources seem to have been copied as incitements to work. Under a newspaper cut of Kipling is a stanza from "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men," ending

> "Man must finish off his work—
> Right or wrong his daily work—
> And without excuses."

In *Werther* (of all books!) he finds similar encouragement. "Ill-humor resembles indolence; it is natural to us; but if we once have courage to exert ourselves, we find our work run fresh from our hands, and we experience in the activity from which we shrank a real enjoyment."

One is tempted to linger over these dog-eared notebooks, because so many of the ideas treasured in them were illustrated

in Stuart Sherman's life or played a part in his thought. Many of his admirers were shocked and pained, years afterward, at what seemed to them his desertion of opinions which he had strongly advocated. But at eighteen, he had cut out and pasted into his notebook this passage from Lyman Abbott: "Though you should live to be as old as Methuselah and go on thinking, you will never come to a time when you can rest satisfied with your creed."

At the end of his essay on Mr. Mencken[6] he puts into the mouth of Mr. Philip Littell "a thought phrased by a subtle writer and set in a charming essay by a famous critic. '*Où il n'y a point de délicatesse, il n'y a point de littérature.*'" At eighteen he had copied into his notebook from Sainte-Beuve's essay on Joubert the whole passage in which his later judgment is implied. "Force is not energy; some authors have more muscle than talent. Force! I do not hate it, nor do I fear it; but, thanks to Heaven, I am entirely disabused in regard to it. It is a quality which is praiseworthy only when it is concealed or clothed. In the vulgar sense Lucan had more of it than Plato, Brébeuf than Racine. . . .

"Where there is no delicacy there is no literature. A writing in which are found only force and a certain fire without splendor, announces only character. One may produce many such, if he has nerves, bile, blood, and boldness."

A second notebook, covering the latter part of this year of postgraduate work in the high school, is devoted chiefly to criticism and poetry. Occasionally he records his impressions of a book. "Not particularly struck with Robert Herrick's poetry. It seems to me a very light growth—Ovid seems more nearly related to Herrick than any other of the family whose acquaintance I have cultivated. His style is easy flowing, musical—it has, to be a little paradoxical, a certain natural artificiality. There is, so far as I can see, nothing of Burns' note of sincerity. Herrick is incapable of such a passage as the famous 'Had we never loved so blindly.' The nature works so much praised I fail to find very praiseworthy; they smack too much of gleanings from yellow pages rather than green fields. There is nothing of Chaucer's jubilant cry over the first May daisy.

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[6]In *Americans*, 1922.

'His eye doesn't seem to be on the object.'" This is, one may suspect, a youthful attempt to judge according to Arnold's touchstone method. In spite of Herrick's failure to meet the tests, the critic seems to have enjoyed him, for he quotes five pages of well-chosen excerpts. But the poet who fascinated him at this time was Donne, to whom he devotes no less than thirty-three pages. He attempts no comments; but his quotations show not only that he keenly relished Donne's characteristic conceits, hyperboles, and antitheses, but that he was immensely stimulated by Donne's intellectual challenge. He admired Donne for exactly the qualities he did not find in Herrick—weight of substance, intensity of feeling, striking originality of thought and phrase. Perhaps the most surprising thing in these early notebooks is to find a boy of eighteen reading Donne's poetry through and delighting in its knottiness.

He was reading criticism at this time largely for guidance in the choice of other reading. He quotes a passage in which Arlo Bates rather snobbishly lists the writers essential to "whoever makes the smallest pretense to culture"; and another in which the same dubious guide damns Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Tolstoy, and Zola in a group. Whether or not it was Bates's condemnation of these writers that sent Stuart to them, within a couple of years he was reading at least three of them with gusto. Saintsbury's enthusiastic superlatives sent him to Donne, Marlowe, and others. Of Stedman he says: "The *Victorian Poets* impresses me as an honest and generous book inspired with true enthusiasm and love for the poetic art. . . . I have to thank this author for my introduction to Landor, Swinburne, and Morris, all of whom I shall attempt to know better as soon as possible."

The last of these youthful notebooks (entitled simply "Books"), which belongs to the summer vacation of 1900, shows the reader relaxing a little after his stiff course of literary criticism and Donne. He reads Marlowe through, on the recommendation of Grosvenor Hill and Saintsbury, but no other poetry and no critical essays. Clearly he felt the need of a change of literary diet. He amuses himself with a group of outdoor books—Henry Van Dyke's *Fisherman's Luck*, H. W. Mabie's *In the Forest of Arden*, Burroughs's *A Year in the Fields*, Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*, and Thoreau's *Summer*. When he

went off for a long drive or an all-day walk with a friend, as he often did this summer, he always carried a book in his pocket. The author whom he now quotes most fully is Thoreau. "I have come to the hill to see the sun go down, to recover sanity, and put myself again in relation with Nature. I would fain drink a draught of Nature's serenity." There are several quotations of this sort; others concerned with friendship; others with the craving for rich and full life. "The chief want is ever a life of deep experiences."—"We do not commonly live our life out and full; we do not fill our extremities with blood; we do not inspire and expire fully enough, so that the wave, the comber of each inspiration, shall break upon our extremest shore, rolling till it meets the sand which bounds us, and the sound of surf comes back to us." Thoreau's comments on the nature of beauty also interested him. "Perfect sincerity and transparency make a great part of beauty, as in dew drops, lakes and diamonds." "The perception of beauty is a moral test." This last sentence is underlined, and the leaf on which it is written is turned down. It was, perhaps, his first encounter with an idea which impressed him deeply, and later attracted him in such writers as Shaftesbury and Pater.

It has seemed worth while to summarize carefully the reading in these youthful notebooks, for several reasons. The later commonplace books of his college and university years have been lost or destroyed. But these, beginning when he was seventeen and ending when he was nineteen, reflect the boy's eager and wide-ranging curiosity, a trait which characterized him to the end of his life and asserted itself with especial vehemence in his last two years, after he had escaped from the distractions of academic work. They reflect, too, his passionate love of beauty and his intense delight in fine and chiseled phrase. They show the beginning of the development of a great reader, who chose his reading neither at random nor in accordance with any set program, but purposively in the directions pointed out by his interest. They illustrate the tendency (which also remained with him all his life) to fall under the spell of one great writer after another—Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, Milton, Stevenson, Kipling, Thoreau—and to try to take possession of all that each of them had to give him. They give us glimpses of his first encounter with ideas and moods which later were to play

an important part in his own thinking and writing. They reflect his moral earnestness and the dawn of his literary ambition.

And yet such a summary would give a false impression of Stuart Sherman as a high school boy if it suggested that he seemed one-sided or abnormal in any way except in his intellectual keenness and imaginative sensitiveness. It must be remembered that he was no pale young scholar, but a big athletic fellow who took a generous share in the activities of his contemporaries, even the rougher ones. He was doubtless thinking of himself when he copied a sentence from Thoreau into a notebook in 1900: "I am startled when I consider how little I am *actually* concerned about the things I write in my journal." At all events, he was concerned about a great many other things. The notebooks, perhaps, do not so much reflect the boy he then was as foreshadow the man he meant to be.

The boy who kept the notebooks, however, appears in a letter written at the end of the high school period to Mr. Hill. Stuart had been somewhat embarrassed by winning a prize in Greek, the establishment of which he had urged. His comments on the prize and his reasons for accepting it are characteristic.

(*To Grosvenor B. Hill*)

Williamstown, Mass.,
July 16, 1900.

My dear Mr. Hill:

"Please find enclosed" receipt for five dollars received from Grosvenor B. Hill as the prize in Greek for the year 1899–1900. An alibi is my just and, if you please, my acceptable defense to an accusation of tardiness in acknowledging; haste to compensate for the delay is my lame and lamentable excuse for not delivering the receipt in person (What for a balanced sentence is that?) Please accept also my compliments and obligations for your kindly consideration in the selection of a coin that charms and dazzles and bears a filleted head stamped *Liberty*, yet by a certain dignity and regal aloofness "*entfernt die Vertraulichkeit*" of its admiring and even its legitimate possessor. And this, I think, is an objection to a money prize. We don't want to worship a golden image. We hate "to spend it all at once"—by reason of its golden good-looks and integrity. So we

lay it aside and forget it. Then some fine day—no, some ill-omened black day, when the first fine careless rapture of possession is over, comes Necessity with the strong right hand well twisted in our collar. Out we go with our little gold button and barter it for a new straw hat and a half-dozen pairs of socks, warranted fast black, and our pride's sentimental emblem is gone as the grass that withereth. Whereas a sumptuous *Milton's Works*, a Spenser, or a Keats, bound exquisitely, would be a thing whose loveliness would never pass away but stand an augescent (Heaven preserve us!) monument and memorial to your intellectual attainments. Selah.

. . . I had thought seriously of resigning any pretensions which I might have had to this prize in favor of the next pretender. It would have been, under the circumstances, a graceful and proper act and one which would have given me full as much pleasure as the present course. In fact, in view of the part I took in getting the prize offered it looks rather queer for me to accept it at all. I have for that complaint only the slight solace that I had no intention of competing for it when I solicited the offering of it. But there is another consideration which it seems to me outweighs this objection, and far outweighs it. I have hinted it to you once or more. It lies in the strong repugnance I feel in allowing the prize to be awarded as a premium for dishonesty. For that I stepped between myself and my inclination and accepted as a martyr to principle, and a not particularly willing or conscious-to-himself-of-being-in-the-right-martyr at that. If the prize had not fallen to me I suppose that some perverse sentiment of honor would have prevented me from speaking of the thing so plainly. Somehow or other the moral sense in respect to this sort of thing in the high school seems not to be very acute. If, for instance, a prize were offered for the best essay in English, I should look to see it taken by some one who could only with difficulty compose a sentence in class, but who had a certain facility of adaptation, a certain laxity of conscience, and friends (?) to revise the product of his eclectic talents, and fit them together in the "deep damnation" of one beautiful Cosmos. If an education is good for anything it ought to teach the educatee that the loveliest of such productions is the unloveliest of unlovely things, but I am afraid that course isn't in the curriculum.

Well, say we descend from the pulpit. The ridiculousness of this letter to be sent by mail a stone's throw overcomes me as it comes over me. I can plead your example for the form though certainly not for the length of the missive. What a great conflagration the little spark kindled. *Haec littera docet:* Beware of dropping sparks. Try to forget it; for in a day or two I shall likely "drop in" with Marlowe and an apology from

Yours very truly,
STUART SHERMAN.

CHAPTER VI

COLLEGE DAYS AT WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS COLLEGE, at the turn of the century, was in process of transition, about halfway between President James A. Garfield's famous log (with Mark Hopkins on the other end) and President Harry Augustus Garfield's luxuriously housed institution. In the administration of President Carter, then nearing its close, a number of new buildings had been erected and the endowment fund considerably increased. But conditions of life were still relatively simple. In the older dormitories, for instance, the rooms were heated by stoves, each student buying and shoveling his own coal. Rooms in these buildings were rented at a nominal charge; the tuition fee was $105. A student without money could still work his way through college without feeling at a serious disadvantage as compared with most of his fellows. The students numbered about four hundred; probably a third of them or more were earning their way, entirely or in part. The older and wealthier fraternities owned expensive houses, but the younger ones were contented for the time with ordinary dwellings. About half of the students, including some of the men most prominent in college affairs, were not fraternity members.

The faculty were for the most part "gentlemen and scholars" of the old style; not "productive scholars" in the modern sense. Scholarship of the Americanized-Teutonic sort was beginning to appear in the younger men, but its possessors were not generally admired by the students. Many of the professors were skilful teachers, and most of them were interesting persons. The writer can remember only two who were really dull, both, as it happened, young instructors fresh from the university mint. Some of the older men were easy-going as to standards, and had the reputation of never having flunked a student. Their courses, however popular with the majority, did not attract students of the type of Stuart Sherman, who were scornful of

"cinches." One really great teacher, John Bascom, was still lecturing to crowded classrooms at Williams with unabated power, more than half a century after his graduation from the college.

In the curriculum the greater part of the work of the first two years was required; that of the last two years was largely elective. Everyone had to take English composition, two years of modern language, a year each of Latin, mathematics, physics, philosophy, and economics, and a semester each of history, biology, and chemistry. The scientific departments, with their new laboratories, were better equipped than those concerned with the humanities. But Lawrence Hall, the old octagonal library with its rotunda and classical columns, its portraits and busts of Williams worthies, and its pleasant rooms in the wings, was a delightful place to read. It is true that the building was already too small for the library (though it was never crowded with readers); that the books were not conveniently arranged; and that modern literature was very inadequately represented. But good books were there in plenty, though one often had to climb a ladder to find them; and the old building had a kind of intimacy and charm that the modern college libraries, scientifically planned for convenience and efficiency, have not succeeded in attaining.

Stuart entered the sophomore class in September, 1900, after passing examinations in freshman subjects, except mathematics; this last he carried as an extra course in his first year. He took the regular required courses in science, passing them all with credit, though his lowest college grades were in physics and trigonometry. These two subjects happened to be taught by men who afterward became college presidents, Professors Lefavour and Ferry. Dr. Lefavour ("Leffy") was voted by the class the professor who had rattled them most. He was a forceful teacher, whose roar of "Sit down!" after one had ventured a guess seemed fairly to blow one over backward into one's seat. Dr. Ferry, on the other hand, was the acme of amiability; his smile was famous, and he ran away from all rivals in the class vote for "pleasantest professor." Neither storms nor smiles, however, could persuade Stuart to go on with physics or mathematics; nor did the admirably clear and skillful lectures of Professor Mears, his future father-in-law, succeed in giving him

a deep interest in chemistry. The only science in which he chose to take a second course was biology, which attracted him chiefly because of the general implications of the idea of evolution. Except for this course in biology and Dr. Bascom's in sociology, all his elections were in the field of language and literature. He took only one course, however, in English literature. In his junior year he had made up his mind pretty definitely that he would prefer to teach English; but he rightly felt that he could best prepare himself for advanced study in that field by gaining as thorough an acquaintance as possible with other languages and literatures. Most of the courses in English literature, moreover, were notoriously easy. Probably the only elective in the department which demanded much work was the one Stuart chose. This was a course in the novel given by Professor Maxcy, an energetic and businesslike teacher who had recently been called to the chair of rhetoric and was giving a course or two in literature.

The study to which he gave the most attention was Latin, which he kept up throughout his college course and thought seriously of teaching. He was fortunate in having two admirable teachers, Professors John Haskell Hewitt and Henry D. Wild. Stuart particularly enjoyed the reading in Latin poetry—Professor Hewitt's courses in Horace and the elegiac poets, and Professor Wild's in the satirists. Professor Hewitt (affectionately nicknamed "Spoop") was a tall white-haired man, a little formal and courtly in his manner, endowed with ripe scholarship and a shrewd and benignant wisdom. Everything he did seemed to be done naturally and without effort. He had a rare and special talent for happy translation, and would read to his classes, apparently offhand, beautifully finished versions of the choruses in Greek tragedy or the Horatian odes. He was a delightful guide to Horace, with whose humanity and wisdom he had much in common. A glimpse of him, reflected in Stuart's memory, appears in an article written in 1908 for the *Evening Post:* "It would be impossible to forget the address on the death of a favorite pupil delivered by an old classical professor who had read his Sophocles and Lucretius for fifty years—its deep feeling, eloquently expressed, yet moulded and subdued by the austerity of his character, and his august bearing toward death and the mystery. It was sternly beautiful and nobly

consolatory. It dignified the dead youth and purged the emotions of the audience with something of the effect attributed by the ancients to tragedy."[1]

Stuart's high school Greek (two years in one) was not enough to qualify him for college courses in that language. But he went on with French and German, giving two years to each, and took also a year of Italian. The teacher of literature who influenced him most deeply was Professor A. H. Morton, with whom in his senior year he took a course in French drama and poetry of the Nineteenth Century. Professor Morton was an exacting teacher who could and did make lazy students extremely uncomfortable by his polite and puzzling irony. The elementary course in French, when he took charge of it, at once became far more difficult than it had ever been before, and large numbers of students failed. Partly for this reason, and partly because they suspected that behind his courteous manner Professor Morton was making merciless fun of them, the generality of students at this time disliked him. But both the severity of his standards and his irony attracted Stuart Sherman. Besides, Professor Morton was more a man of the world than most of his colleagues and his interests were wider than theirs. He was a lover of ideas —a student of philosophy, of religion, of art. He was so deeply interested in philosophy and religion, indeed, that he has since shifted his teaching to those fields.

To a teacher of this type Stuart was irresistibly drawn. He had been thinking a good deal about the problems of life and had come to the conclusion that all the traditional beliefs must be discarded. He became for the time a convinced materialist and determinist, and though he was dissatisfied with this philosophy he could see no way to escape it. He read Thomas Hardy's novels and found in them—particularly in *Jude the Obscure*—impressive evidence of the tragic helplessness of mankind in the grip of impersonal forces, indifferent or cruel. He found that he could discuss such questions freely and impersonally with Professor Morton, who disagreed with him but was never shocked, and seemed to enjoy the free play of intelligence with ideas.

There are two functions of teachers with reference to creeds,

[1] "The Really Academic," New York *Evening Post*, June 17; *Nation*, June 25, 1908.

not usually performed by the same persons—to bind and to loose. Both services are essential; but the law-giver usually receives more credit than he deserves and the emancipator less. Professor Morton's influence upon Stuart was largely of the second type. He did not convert the young pessimist to a different view of life; probably he did not try to. Professor Morton helped him, none the less, by showing him that an acute thinker, whose learning and wisdom he had come to respect, could be thoroughly skeptical of the grim creed which seemed to him inescapable. His talks and correspondence with Professor Morton made him aware of the existence of other defensible points of view, remote from his own; they kept him from taking his own conclusions too seriously. Professor Morton also gave him encouragement by discriminating praise of his writing. When he returned to Williamstown in later years he always had a talk with Professor Morton, and the two men corresponded at irregular intervals throughout Stuart's life. A letter from Professor Morton was an event to note in a diary.

A different kind of influence, less intimate, perhaps, but not less far reaching, was exerted by the greatest of Stuart's college teachers (perhaps the best of all his teachers), Dr. John Bascom. When Stuart as a senior took his course in sociology Dr. Bascom was in his seventy-sixth year—the last of his active service in the college. Tall, erect, with aquiline features and piercing blue eyes, he somewhat resembled President Eliot in personal dignity and force, as well as in a sort of remoteness which made him seem to many students unapproachable. He lacked Eliot's political gift of handling men; but in eloquence he was fully Eliot's equal, and he had besides the moral passion and the spiritual vision of a prophet. In the classroom he gave the impression of seeing all round and through a subject. All his life he had been in the eyes of the orthodox a heretic, and in the eyes of the conservative a radical —in education, in politics, in religion. For thirteen years, as president of the University of Wisconsin, he had exerted a profound influence upon the students of that institution and upon the temper of the state.[2] But Bascom was too little inclined to

[2]Dean Birge goes so far as to declare that the university "never has performed a public service, and never will perform one, equal to Dr. Bascom's teaching of philosophy and ethics. I question whether the history of any

compromise to satisfy a state legislature, and he had returned to his own college to spend his later years. Though he was by far the most distinguished member of its faculty, Williams never after his return gave him a professorship in the subject that was nearest his heart, philosophy, or even an opportunity to teach it. His official title in his last years was simply "Lecturer in Sociology." Old age did not bring to him conservatism or contentment with things as they are; with advancing years his thinking seemed to grow even freer and bolder, and his exposure of social and economic injustice in his lectures to his classes was searing and unforgettable. "The center of all virtue," he said, "is a pursuit of the truth; prudence in its expression is wholly secondary. We sin many times in lacking courage, where we sin once by failing in prudence."[3] His manner was serene, but his hearers got the impression of vast power in reserve; his serenity was of the sort the poet describes:

> "True calm doth quiver like the calmest star;
> It is that white where all the colors are."

Dean Birge has said of Dr. Bascom's students: "With one consent they look back to his teaching as that experience which most illuminated life for them." Stuart Sherman's acknowledgment of what this illumination meant to him may be found in a review[4] of John Jay Chapman's *Learning and Other Essays* which he wrote for the *Nation* in 1908. After quoting a paragraph in which Mr. Chapman "tells the graduating class of a college how to fail," Sherman writes:

"We have heard that note struck by a white-haired, unbent, stately old professor of moral philosophy in one of the New England colleges—one of the last of the transcendentalists.

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great commonwealth can show so intimate a relation between the forces which have governed its social development and the principles expounded from a teacher's desk as that which exists between Wisconsin and the classroom of John Bascom." In other words, it would appear that Dr. Bascom's teaching laid the foundations for the career of Senator La Follette.

[3]Quoted by Dean Birge in an address at a memorial service at the University of Wisconsin in 1911.

[4]Reprinted in *Shaping Men and Women*. The passage quoted is on pp. 55–57.

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When he spoke his face lost all its customary mild benignity, and grew hard, grim, and lonely like a crag in a high mountain, and his eyes seemed to be fixed upon something far away that none of us had seen. He told us that, if we would live true to our own clearest vision, we must not hope for the world's success; that in the significant crises of our lives, in every moment of deepest trial, whether triumphant or tragic in issue, we must stand utterly alone; yet not alone, because upheld by the hands of men before us who had embraced disaster like a bride, sustained by faith in her ultimate issue. What the old man said seemed to cut like a sword through the knot of contemporary moral and political compromise. While he was speaking he seemed to lift us without stooping toward his own level, and to steel our hearts with something of his own heroic and inspiring inflexibility. And when we left his presence, we felt that he had given us a lamp trimmed and burning to guide us through the night of experience. He conducted no doctor's dissertations that we remember, but he showed us the face of truth and the austerest beauty of character.

"Such was the choicest gift of the old colleges."[5]

Dr. Bascom once said to a colleague that he always aimed his teaching at the three or four best men in the class and let the others get what they could from it. He never talked down to them; he was not afraid of "talking over their heads." This may be one of the reasons for the stimulating quality of his teaching. The best men were never sure that they had understood his full meaning, and both to them and to the rest his lectures were a continual challenge to intellectual effort.

Sherman's scholastic record was a brilliant one. None of his grades fell below the "honor" level (B), and six sevenths of them were A's. At the end of his sophomore year he won a first prize in Latin; in his junior year the Clark Prize Scholarship, for work done outside his courses in French and German; and in his senior year first prizes in Latin and French and a second prize in German. He divided with a classmate, Charles Irving Wood, the "Prize for Prizes," given at Williams, on the Scriptural

[5]It seems worth remarking that if the retirement rule now in force at Williams had been applied to Dr. Bascom, Stuart Sherman and some hundreds of others would have missed this "choicest gift."

principle "to him that hath shall be given," to that member of the senior class who has captured most prizes in his course. At the end of his junior year he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He graduated as salutatorian of his class; the valedictorian was Charles M. Turell, another brilliant scholar who was later one of his roommates at Cambridge.

He was not, however, regarded by his classmates as a grind. Conclusive evidence on this point is furnished by the 1903 class book, which records that he was voted by a large majority the "brightest man" in the class, and by a good plurality the "most versatile," but received no votes in the choice of the "worst grind."

The vote that he was the most versatile man in the class is significant in view of the fact that he definitely and resolutely limited his participation in college activities. He did not squander his energies in doing many things, but concentrated them on those for which he really cared. His size and strength would have qualified him for the football team, or the weight events in track athletics. But he had had enough experience on school athletic teams to learn how much time and energy practice consumes. In his sophomore year he took part in some interclass contests. Going into the freshman-sophomore track meet with almost no preliminary practice, he took first place in the hammer throw. In the freshman-sophomore football game he played at left tackle. He had thus done enough to show that he could do more; and pressure was of course put upon men of athletic ability, then quite as much as now, to "go out for the team." Stuart, however, took no further part in organized athletics, though he continued to play tennis for fun. He was a clever actor and might easily have been prominent in college dramatics, but he probably never tried for a part. This was not because he lacked interest in football or dramatics, nor was it mainly because he was ambitious to excel in his studies; he could have played on an athletic team and maintained high grades, as his friend Turell did. But his time was limited. He was living at home and earning his board and room by work for his mother; he was also doing a good deal of tutoring, chiefly in Latin, French, and German; and such energy as he had to spare he chose to put into the avocations which interested him most deeply.

Some of these were recognized "student activities." He was fond of music and had a good baritone voice. He sang in the college choir and was for two years a member of the Glee Club. But except for this and his sophomore adventures in interclass athletics his participation in student affairs was purely literary. Soon after he entered college he began to contribute verse to the *Williams Literary Monthly* (the "Lit."), which was then an excellent gymnasium for ambitious young writers. At the end of his sophomore year he was elected to the board of editors, and a year later was the unanimous choice of the board for editor-in-chief. In his junior year he was also an associate editor of the college annual, the *Gulielmensian* (commonly known as the "Gul"). His contributions to this (all of which were unsigned) were mostly in the form of burlesque and satiric verse. He wrote also three or four bits of light verse for "Cobwebs," a department of the college weekly. At the sophomore class banquet he read a poem, and it was a matter of course that he should be chosen to deliver the class poem at graduation.

The same resolution that determined the restriction of his college activities also governed Sherman in his choice of associates. Until near the end of his college course he refrained from connecting himself with any fraternity. It was only in the second semester of his senior year that he yielded to the persuasion of a group of friends and joined them in organizing a local fraternity, Alpha Zeta Alpha. The organization had for its avowed purpose to choose members on grounds of character and ability and to maintain high standards of scholarship. Its founders hoped that its influence would greatly improve the conditions of social life at Williams, through setting an example of social democracy to the older societies. The founding of the new fraternity was briefly announced in the *Williams Weekly* on March 13, 1903; the names of its members were not published.

Readers who have any acquaintance with academic life will recognize, of course, in the high aims of Alpha Zeta Alpha those of many other college fraternities (perhaps of all) at their inception. Beginning by insisting on their differences from older organizations, these new groups soon feel the pressure which has made the older ones so much alike, and within a few years

it is difficult for an outsider to tell them apart. No fraternal organization is exempt from this tendency, however sincerely its founders may try to combat it. Stuart, who had little sympathy with college fraternities in general, was not at all inclined to compromise with the tendency toward conformity in his own, and when he judged that Alpha Zeta Alpha was becoming more and more like its elders he regretted having joined it. He was especially displeased by a movement toward affiliation with some national organization and seriously considered withdrawing from the group. In 1912 he wrote in some irritation to a fellow member, saying that he had always hated fraternities and that he had joined this one out of regard for some of its founders, and expressing very frankly his dissatisfaction with the plan to become a chapter of a national organization. He did not withdraw, chiefly because of his affection for some individual members; but he was never initiated into the national fraternity in which Alpha Zeta Alpha was merged.

Sherman's friends in college were representative of several aspects of student life. There were the Mears brothers—Brainerd and Harris—whose bent was largely toward athletics; Sam Allen, the oldest member of the class, and one of the most popular, in whom the scholarly interest was dominant though not exclusive; Charley Turell, combining the athletic with the scholarly; and Pat Callan, manager of the "Lit.," social, philosophic, and genially all-embracing in his outlook. Then there were the literary fellows, who included among others Harry Smith, Max Eastman, Morris Harmon, Charles Whittlesey, and Bruce Brotherston. Max Eastman (who wrote his name "Max Forrester Eastman" then) was in the class below Stuart's, and was on the "Lit." board in Stuart's senior year. He was a dark handsome fellow, a poet, and in appearance and manner a generous young aristocrat; as yet he showed no signs of radicalism. Morris Harmon, now professor of Greek at Yale, was the best classical scholar of his time at Williams, and the valedictorian of the class above Stuart's. "Chick" Whittlesey—afterward famous as the leader of the "Lost Battalion"—was another fine scholar with literary interests and talent. Bruce Brotherston had been a workingman and was a scholar, a preacher, and a poet who wrote delightful lyrics in Scotch

dialect. At the "Lit." banquet in 1903 Stuart saluted him thus:

"O rare sweet bard who gart us gape
With love-lays fine and fancy,
No more for us thou'lt sing the joy
Tae be alane wi' Nancy.
Thy ghost shall walk by brig and burn
A' braw wi' plume and plaidie,
And Berkshire Hills shall nae forget
Their canny Hielan' laddie."[6]

Harry James Smith was a year ahead of Stuart in college, and in his senior year editor in chief of the "Lit." With the exception of Stuart he was the most versatile writer in college; his stories, indeed, were much better than Stuart's. Sensitive, quick in sympathy and wit, emotionally mercurial, with the liveliest humor and the frankest egoism, he was the cleverest talker among Stuart's contemporaries at Williams and the most entertaining and delightful companion. A reminiscent entry in Stuart's diary,[7] written some years after Harry's death, gives a brief sketch of him:

Friends in College. Letter from Harry Smith's brother reminds me of our literary circle at college and what a romantic figure, in some ways, he was; how keen for literature; how fluent and picturesque in talk; how much expression meant to him; his change in the New York life; the girls who teased him for drinking milk; the one who spilled the beer; how he took to cigarettes; . . . his Cape Breton vacations; his French novels; his taste for the picturesque and simple in peasant life, against the sophistication of New York Bohemian existence; his architectural friend; his sisters; Jean; affectionate nature. Sphagnum moss; Greylock.

"Greylock" means that Stuart remembered Harry's camping on the mountain, and his cheerful lack of relish for rough outdoor life. "Sphagnum moss" is a reminder of the tragic circum-

[6] *Williams Literary Monthly*, June, 1903.
[7] February 20, 1921.

stances of Harry's death. He was something of a botanist and had made a special study of this rare moss, which was much needed for surgical dressings during the war. Physically unable to qualify for army service, he had given up his literary work and gone to British Columbia to gather sphagnum for the use of the Red Cross. He was killed in an automobile accident, which happened, it is said, because the driver of the car became so interested in Harry's conversation that he failed to pay attention to the road.

With these friends Sherman was always eager to share his discoveries as a reader and acted as an ardent propagandist for whatever author he was enjoying at the moment. A small group used to read plays and poetry together, sometimes with a bottle of wine or a jug of cider to honor the occasion. One of them remembers reading with him several Greek tragedies in translation, Stephen Phillips's tragedies (Phillips then seemed the rising star of English poetry), several of Maeterlinck's plays, and some of Arnold's poetry. One night they read *Agamemnon*, *Œdipus the King*, and *Œdipus at Colonus*, the last between two and three o'clock in the morning. This was the occasion of a sonnet, ending,

> "The tale was done and homeward trod we late
> The village street, antithesis of strife.
> But low the eyeless clouds with ambush rife
> Their silence dumb and dread maintained,
> And in our hushed and sobered spirits reigned
> The old night-shrouded mysteries of life."

There was much talk about books, also, in the course of outings with Homer Woodbridge and other friends over the hilly country roads around Williamstown. The Woodbridges had horses and an assortment of vehicles; for these excursions the favorite were a dogcart seating four people and a light Meadowbrook cart. In 1901 they took a four-day drive "down the county," spending one night at a country inn. Stuart always had a book or two in his pocket; on this trip they read *Othello* aloud, finishing the play by lantern light at a mosquito-haunted bivouac in North Lee. Another book debated fiercely on this journey was a brief exposition of positivism and the

doctrines of Comte. Stuart was immediately converted and became for the time being not only a positivist but an ardent propagandist for positivism. He advocated even Comte's proposals for the government of society by a caste of philosophers and a ritualistic religion of humanity. Impatient at his friend's obstinate refusal to become a fellow disciple and join in worshiping Humanity, he declared in disgust that he had never known anyone so inhospitable to new ideas. "When you see a new idea on the horizon," he said, "you go in the house and lock all the doors and windows and get out the old shotgun. I have to pull you out and beat you over the head with the idea before I can get you to admit that it may be worth looking at." The arguments with Woodbridge were generally strenuous and frequently abusive. Madison Bates, a Williams friend, said that the first time he was present at one of these amicable discussions he expected the matter to come to blows. Later Stuart discovered and quoted to his friend with great satisfaction Montaigne's comment on such outspoken arguments: "I love stout expressions amongst gentlemen, and to hear them speak as they think. . . . I love a strong and manly familiarity and conversation, a friendship that pleases itself in the sharpness and vigor of its communications . . . it is not vigorous and generous enough if it be not quarrelsome, if it be civilized and artificial." However violent the language they used, the disputants did not lose their tempers; they enjoyed the row and the process of trying to exasperate each other so heartily that anger was out of the question. It is high praise of Stuart as a friend to say that he was an ideal man to quarrel with. He really enjoyed taking hard knocks quite as keenly as giving them.

As for his positivism, he remained a devoted follower of Comte for perhaps a couple of months, and then his devotion waned. It was characteristic of him to be always reaching out after new ideas and philosophies, and to adopt them and defend them stoutly till by this process he had discovered their weaknesses. Then he would withdraw from them strategically without explicitly admitting that he had given them up.

Sherman's appetite for reading was not limited to the normal academic fare. In his eagerness to absorb recent and contemporary literature he met with serious obstacles in the college library, and one of his editorials in the "Lit." severely criticizes the

library for its lack of modern authors. As to Ibsen, Maeterlinck, and Verlaine, he complains the catalogue refers one merely to Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature. Maupassant, Leconte de Lisle, Pierre Loti, Anatole France, Jókai, Sienkiewicz, and Stephen Phillips are represented only by a single volume apiece.[8] When Stuart could not get books that he wanted at the library, he bought them if he could possibly raise the money. Since he did not belong to a fraternity or go to college "proms," he could afford to buy a book occasionally. Thus he acquired, for instance, Archer's translation of Ibsen and several volumes of Maeterlinck. His friend Carl Smith, who kept the college bookstore, was generous with discounts and also with presents of books, and thus earned the nickname "Mæcenas."

In a letter[9] to his aunt, Ellen Burns Sherman, Stuart comments briefly on his absorption in Ibsen and more fully on a book which Miss Sherman had sent him. Writing as one Stevensonian to another, in his remarks on Ibsen, he reproduces the accent of Stevenson with amusing accuracy.

"It's so easy now (in summer) to persuade oneself that one has a right, forgetting sin and damnation, to feel now and then the *joie de vivre*, to be what the Norwegians call a 'life-glad man.' Reality, with the furrowed brow and the 'brown taste in the mouth' stares one in the face soon enough afterwards, the Lord knows. By the way, are you an Ibsenian? or are you anti-ibsenese? I've just got his works and am up to the ears in them. He won't have any readers dallying with him; it's a case of 'the wedding guest stands still and listens like a three years' child.' It's off coat and waistcoat! off hide! open ribs and diaphragm, is there a heart in this body or is there not? You see I have it bad.

"*The Touchstone* came several days ago. . . . I have read only a third of the book as yet, so I can't discuss the story, but she certainly has a style. My only question is, hasn't she sometimes too much style? e. g. the ordinary mortal would say, 'as chance

[8]This seems a severe reflection on the Williams Library; but neglect of contemporary authors is a malady most incident to college libraries.

[9]Printed in Miss Sherman's book *Words to the Wise—and Others*, in an essay on "Modern Letter-Writing," pp. 217–219.

would have it (or *so etwas*) the lamplight fell on a photograph of Alexa Trent.' Mrs. Wharton says, 'The tacit connivance of the inanimate had centered the lamplight,' and I am sensible that her expression is more accurate and more suggestive, and now and then a phrase like that is good. But one doesn't like everything said in that difficult way. Here's another: 'He was conscious of a duality of intention wherein his apparent wish to leave revealed itself as a last effort of the will against the overmastering desire to stay.' These are merely random excerpts. Surely, Mrs. Wharton, in daily life, would not say that she 'was conscious of a duality of intention wherein her apparent wish to save two dollars revealed itself as a last effort of the will against the overmastering desire to buy a pair of kid gloves.' But there are a lot of fine things in the book."

Stuart himself had "too much style" of the Stevensonian sort at this time; but it was a hopeful sign that he discerned so clearly the excess of another imitative style in Mrs. Wharton.

The summer, with its comparative freedom from routine work, was the great time for general reading and for outdoor recreations. Occasional tasks of tutoring boys for examinations interfered only slightly with these pursuits; but when Stuart tried to combine them, they sometimes refused to mix well. A letter to his aunt, Ellen Burns Sherman, complains of the incompatibility of serious reading with camping:

"I had a nice little bag of books along, which I had dreamed of reading in the long afternoons under the spruces. Reading, bit by bit, at every opportunity, I accomplished in two weeks one comedy of Congreve's, and half of *The Egoist*. To be sure, *The Egoist* is not the rapidest reading in the world. It goes down better in small portions, two or three chapters at a time, like a handful of dates after dinner. Then while you are reading it you have that delightful 'Lord-I-thank-thee-that-I-am-not-as-other-men-are' sensation."[10]

Probably he had this experience in mind when he wrote a theme on "Reading in the Open Air" in Dean Briggs's course at Harvard. "The genius of the forest," he says, "is illiterate; Pan is never seen in spectacles nor do the dryads suffer from astigmatism. . . . In the forest nature is held up to the mirror,

[10]Letter printed in *Words to the Wise—and Others*, p. 221.

and the mirror is found wanting. . . . Milton's "L'Allegro" may be read to advantage on a mountain top in the flush of a rose-hearted morning, with a reasonable doubt whether the morning contributed more to the poem than the poem to the morning. But the general run of literature lacks this hypæthral quality."

In addition to Milton, he later recalled Stephen Phillips as one whom he had sat up half the night to read "round a fire on the slope of Mount Greylock" and whose lines "could stand the comment of the spruces and the mountain top." Some lines from "Herod" and "Marpessa" continued to haunt his imagination long after:

> "I heard an angel crying from the sun
> For glory, for more glory on the earth."

> "Lonely antagonists of Destiny
> That went down scornful before many spears."

But camping had its own delights, and Mount Greylock was sufficient unto itself. The camp on Greylock was the spot dearest to Sherman among the "familiar and fondly visited peaks" that encircles Williamstown. As you approach the mountain from the Williamstown side, you enter the gate of a great wooded valley, the Hopper, and turning southward climb the steep rocky trail across the inner slope of Bald Mountain, through forests of white birch and maple and beech and hemlock, till you come out in a high mountain park or "saddle," connecting Bald Mountain with the main Greylock ridge. At the eastern edge of this park, in a dense wood of tall spruces, where the hermit thrush sings at morning and evening, is a little clearing, with a small stream on each side, flowing southward into another steep-walled valley, the Heart of Greylock. Below the clearing the main stream plunges down the valley, between huge primeval hemlocks, in a ladder of cascades totaling some hundreds of feet in height. In the clearing between the two brooks was the camp ground, with trails radiating from it along the cathedral aisles of the spruces. It would be hard to imagine a spot more idyllically charming or one better adapted to the purposes of a camp.[11]

[11] It has now been spoiled for camping purposes by the construction of an automobile road.

Here every summer for six years (1900–1905) Stuart with a group of his friends spent some days or weeks. The personnel of the camp varied from year to year, but until 1906 it always included Stuart and his sisters, Persis and Katherine, Ruth Mears, Margaret Cole, Sarah Dale, Carl Smith, and Homer Woodbridge. Several other Williams men were among the campers at one time or another: Brainerd Mears, who was always building bridges and benches and other camp improvements; Bill Spencer, who was famous for his prowess with an ax and for the large collection of neckties he brought to camp (one was the normal maximum); Harry James Smith, whose sophisticated tastes found camp life rather too simple; Leigh Sanford, an admirable all-round camper, and "Fritz" Hummel, who later gained reputation as a story writer and novelist. Fritz was at this time not at all literary; he was an ebullient German youth, overflowing with animal spirits, and singing "Die Wacht am Rhein" with tremendous gusto. In unquenchable gayety of spirits Sally Dale was his only rival in the camp. Mrs. Mears (Ruth's mother) chaperoned in 1902 and 1903; she was as young in spirit as any of the campers, and Stuart, who was very fond of her, appointed himself her special chevalier. One rainy morning Dr. Bascom and Mr. Cole appeared, and Dr. Bascom's seventy-five years did not prevent him from going on over the rough and very wet trail to the Bluffs. It was largely through his influence that the mountain had been acquired by the state as a park and the forests preserved from encroaching sawmills.

On fine days the campers tramped all over the surrounding mountains and valleys. They—or some of them—often got up at three o'clock to climb to the summit of Greylock and see the sunrise, stumbling up the steep trail in the early morning dusk and looking back through the mists at the red moon setting behind them. After witnessing the "cold glories of the dawn" they could get hot coffee (of a sort) at the summit house, and then return to camp with a marvelous appetite for griddle cakes and corn syrup. Other trips took them down the brooks into the Heart of Greylock or the Hopper, where there were no trails, and they had to clamber over cascades and thread their way through tangles of fallen trees and underbrush, and climb the mountain again to camp. On one such trip, recorded in

Stuart's diary,[12] he descended the Hopper brook, turned back up one of its branches, and climbed to the top of Greylock over Waubeek Falls, the highest series of cascades in the region.

The favorite moonlight walk was a stroll of a mile or so to the Bluffs; from this point one could look down more than a thousand feet into the great wooded gorge of the Hopper, and across it to the lofty mountain wall of Greylock. One could hear the distant roar of the waterfalls, and across the open upland catch the gleam of the camp fire through the spruces. Sometimes the campers had a sing at the Bluffs, but more often around the fire or at the little cairn in the clearing across the brook, from which they liked to watch the sunset.

Rainy weather brought them back with new gusto to familiar pastimes. There were games of horseshoes and of cards and reading aloud of books that were fitted to entertain a company, such as the *Rudder Grange* of Frank Stockton and *Jane Eyre*. Occasionally an excess of high spirits found vent in a practical joke. But the kind of experience which provided Sherman with the greatest satisfaction was one that had in it the thrill of hardship and tested the temper of his gaiety, such an experience as he describes in his essay "Camping in the Greenwood."[13]

"Under a sulky and lachrymose sky your fair-weather camper absorbs moisture like a soggy cracker, loses all his snap and is no further use in camp. Three days of rain will completely dephlogisticate[14] him. . . .

"The true camper rejoices in adversity. Suppose your tents are pitched at the inauguration of a forty days' deluge and the drenching greyness never lifts. . . . If the commonwealth calls for firewood, you must shoulder your axe and whistle as blithely through the reeking underbrush as if the sun were in heaven and the birds upon a thousand hills breaking forth in a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs. These things are very much as one takes them.

"Why, there was a midnight, not recorded in history, when a storm broke upon a flyless tent and caught the unsuspecting

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[12] July 26, 1905.

[13] *Williams Literary Monthly*, November, 1902.

[14] Stuart was quizzed a good deal about this word but maintained that it was the "inevitable word" for his purpose. It is a term of alchemy, and means "to take the fire out of." He was fond of trying out rare words.

inmates asleep upon the ground in the midst of their newly arrived baggage. The rain entered from above and on every side. In ten minutes the delta of the Nile was not a circumstance to that tent floor. The sleepers arose clad Indian-wise in a single sodden and clammy blanket and gathered in a circle about the stump of a sputtering candle. There was absolutely nothing to do; baggage, cards, tobacco, everything was soaked. And so they stood, shoulder to shoulder, till three in the morning. Final y someone broke from the circle and, splashing out into the watery world, presently returned with an armful of wood from the heart of which some dry splinters were hewn. A cheerful blaze was kindled where the candle stood, and darkness was driven out of doors.[15] Soon a fragrant aroma of hot coffee filled the tent and when the tin cups went round they laughed at their cold and dripping blankets, the puddled floor, and the power of the rain and the night. Someone picked up a book that had fallen on its face in the mire and reading aloud at random, chanced upon this line: '*Olim haec meminisse iuvabit.*' It was a response worthy of the Sibyl; the woe of that night is enshrined for those campers in the very 'amber of memory.'"

"Fact is," Stuart wrote to his aunt after one of these experiences, "I had the best time that this mundane Life ever handed out. We just made old Dame Fortune stand and deliver like a Lady."

Another manifestation of Sherman's interest in the out of doors was his fondness for exploring caves. There are several in the vicinity of Williamstown, all of which, armed with ropes and candles, he and his friends tried to explore. The largest one, near Berlin, New York, they penetrated to a distance of about a quarter of a mile; it has several good-sized rooms, connected by narrow and sometimes very low passages, through which runs a small underground brook. In the lowest chamber they extinguished their candles, so as to experience for a minute the sensation of utter subterranean darkness. To celebrate the occasion, they jointly improvised some doggerel verses:

"On our bellies here we crawled,
Jutting rocks our hard heads mauled,

[15]So were the campers—by the smoke from that fire. This narrative is a little idealized in spots.—H. E. W.

And the ghastly ghoulish stream
'Neath our diaphragms did gleam,
By the yellow candle light
In that subterranean night.

"Forty fathoms 'neath the mould,
Teeth a-chatter with the cold,
Shall we wait the messenger
From the outer light and air?
'No, we won't,' the rocks we tell
'By the blackest brook of Hell!'"

The concluding line, borrowed from Sir Philip Sidney, was one of Stuart's favorite oaths. Another was William the Conqueror's "*Par la splendeur de Dieu!*"

Early in his college days the experience of love came into Sherman's life, and it came in earnest. Though he was attractive to women, and had various passing flirtations, he was not the sort of youth who falls in and out of love easily. The deep feeling which underlies the playful charm of the poem "Flower-Gathering"[16] is of the kind that endures. Fortunately, he fell in love with a girl of exceptionally keen intelligence, with a personality as positive and a will as strong as his own. The woman who was to marry Stuart needed these qualities; for if he was not stoutly resisted he was capable at times of becoming a sort of benevolent despot. This was no doubt the fault attached to one of his most shining virtues, his delight in a vigorous duel of wits and minds. People who yielded tamely to him he rather despised; people who worshiped him he regarded with amused contempt. Toward women, especially, his general attitude was one of tolerant condescension, though this was veiled by a manner of half-ironic deference which they frequently did not see through. When he met a girl who did see through it and whose keenness of wit made it dangerous to treat her condescendingly, he promptly fell in love with her.

Miss Ruth Mears, whose father was professor of chemistry at Williams, was a student at Vassar. Stuart first met her when she was at home for the Christmas vacation of 1897. The girl who

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[16]See page 94.

introduced him told her afterward that he "thought in poetry" —a characterization about which Miss Mears later teased him unmercifully. There were several skating parties that vacation, at which Stuart often skated with her. The acquaintance suffered an unromantic interruption in the form of an attack of mumps, which kept Stuart in the house during the latter part of the vacation. He persuaded his cousin Huntington, who was visiting him, to carry his kodak to church and take a picture of Ruth. Since Huntington naturally hesitated to confront with a camera a lady whom he scarcely knew, Stuart had to be contented with a view of her back. Later, hearing that she had come down with the mumps, Stuart wrote her a letter of sympathy, which she thought impertinent and did not deign to answer.

During the next three years Stuart seldom saw her. In 1900, however, the Shermans moved from Southworth Avenue to Hoxey Street, where they were almost the nearest neighbors of the Mearses. In the Christmas vacation the skating acquaintance was resumed, and there were sleigh rides and a Christmas party with a tree at a friend's house. After Ruth's return to Poughkeepsie Stuart corresponded with her regularly, and in June, 1901, he gained her consent to an engagement. This they kept officially secret for a year and a half, though of course it was strongly suspected by their friends.

Ruth Mears inherited her father's scientific tastes and took a master's degree in chemistry at Vassar. But she was also keenly interested in literature and had decided opinions about it. Stuart, of course, was constantly writing and talking to her about the books which interested him; she read many of them, and lively discussions resulted. There was, for instance, an argument about the meaning of a passage in one of George Meredith's sonnets. The poet, after complaining of the recipe on which women are made, exclaims, "More brain, O Lord, more brain!" Stuart maintained that Meredith was petitioning the Deity to bestow a larger allotment of brain upon women; but the lady urged with much plausibility the view that the line is really a humble prayer, to this effect: "O Lord, give me more brain, that I may understand this wonderful creature!"

Some of the happiest weeks in the summer vacations Stuart spent in visiting the Mearses at the ancestral home of Mrs. Mears's family in Nottingham Square, New Hampshire. The

fine old house, full of heirlooms, had been in the possession of the family for a hundred years, and they regularly spent their summers there. Nottingham Square consists of a few old homesteads about a crossroads on the top of a high hill, with a view including glimpses of the ocean, an amphitheater of hills, and distant mountains. Stuart's first visit was in 1903, and the place, the people, and their traditions impressed him deeply. Several of the themes which he wrote the next year in Dean Briggs's course deal with Nottingham subjects. One of them is a descriptive sketch which tries to capture the genius of the place. For the sake of his effect he overstressed the traits suggesting decadence, and perhaps for that reason he changed the name to "Toningham."

"Still white roads walled high with oak and pine wind among the New Hampshire hills to the wilderness where the ancient village of Toningham lies dreaming and dying. In bygone days it was a prosperous little town on the main stage-road between Dover and Concord. A hundred years ago farmers found here a market for their produce, a busy saw-mill furnished a throb of life, and the 'Half Way House' and its rival hostelry 'The Traveller's Friend,' swarmed with guests. But the westward emigration carried off many of its sturdiest sons, and many fell in the Civil War. . . . To-day Toningham cannot boast so much as a country store. The saw-mill, the inns, and most of the houses have crumbled into dust. . . . The country-side too is returning to the wilderness; grassy meadows have reverted to juniper swamps and pasture lands to impenetrable thickets. . . .

"Silence is characteristic of Toningham day and night. It reigns at high noon in the heart of the village. The wheels of infrequent vehicles roll softly through the deep white dust. The sunlight broods peacefully over the 'Square'; no stir of drowsy leaves is heard, not so much as the turning of a leaf in sleep. But at night the silence is ominous and mystic. Toningham is in truth one great cemetery. Every house has a private burying ground with numberless stones commemorating the deeds of the forgotten dead. Here rests the dust of a Revolutionary general and many a plain stout patriot. Mingled with these are the relics of early colonials, and to this day you may see the vestiges of the old Indian graves."

The eccentric characters of this decadent village interested

Stuart, and he wrote delightful little sketches of the Marston "girls," aged seventy and ninety-three, who "will whisper to you of 'my grandfather, Captain Durgin, who fought at Bunker Hill'"; of George Goodrich, the wild hermit of the mountains; of the Reverend Mr. Lorrison, the "Hunting Parson of Toningham," who having constructed a hemlock screen in the woods would sit down for hours behind it to wait for the partridges, smoking his pipe to keep off the mosquitoes and chuckling over his well-worn copy of *Tristram Shandy*.

A letter to Homer Woodbridge reflects Stuart's enjoyment of some of the pleasures of Nottingham. Written in a hilarious mood, it begins with a salutation in Greek letters, "μι βαυκοκ ανδ μι ἀρτ οφ γολδ," and ends thus:

"Ruth, Fred and I went fishing last night. Got back about 10 P. M. Went out in a boat and brought home two strings of fish, one about a yard long (i. e.—the string). The longest fish was about one foot. There were five or six perch of good size—and some twenty nice fat horned pout. Your horned pout, sir, is a very delectable fish, very nice and tender, sir. It is as long as its length and ——. The Hunting Parson of Toningham wants to show me a place where the pickerel basks.

". . . Keep me posted, sir, on your changes of places, health, plans, mind, and estate. Be a dispenser of Sweetness and Light. *Omnia Providentiæ Committe!* Let me hear from you with all diligence and detail. R. sends L.

"Yours till the Crack of Doom,
"S."

On these visits he and Ruth read together a good deal. A letter written August 1, 1904, after his return to Williamstown, shows him under the spell of Shaw and gives glimpses of other Nottingham occupations. After describing a trip to Greylock and remarking, "En route, I managed to read them one act of *Cæsar and Cleopatra*," he goes on: "By the way, I took up one volume of Shaw, you know. R. B. M. and I read that through. Shortly after, she went down to Boston, and I had her get two more volumes of Shaw. These also we read. Then we went back to the Elizabethan Shakespeare. Read in an afternoon at a sitting *Hamlet;* also *Othello*, *Henry V.*, *Tempest*, *Antony and*

Cleopatra, part of *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Measure for Measure*. Also we went berrying frequently, and fishing some more. Would you had been there when we caught the last great eel, who broke the fishpole plunging under the boat. R. leaped up on the seat and screamed: 'Don't put it on me!' Tho of course we cherished no such sinister ideas. We also caught a goodly number of other fin-bearers. Also we gave a play before I came home,—*The Vagabonds*. We played to an overflowing house—with good applause. R. B. M. was an antiquated rose-and-lavender old maid, S. P. S. was heavy villain. Lots of stabbing and shooting. Nice.—It's plaguey stupid here in Williamstown, but we are making a manful effort to possess our souls in patience. I'm going to try to educate my acquaintances up to G. B. Shaw.—Virus already set."[17]

The direction of Sherman's mental development during these years may be traced through his writing for the college publications. Most of his serious literary effort went into the "Lit." He was much more interested in writing poetry than in anything else, and a large majority of his contributions were in verse. The magazine printed two stories by him, three essays, and twenty-three poems. His friends and teachers were inclined to expect that he would gain distinction as a poet, and his own ambition was toward poetic achievement. The men who wrote the reviews of the "Lit." for the *Weekly*, generally members of the faculty or literary alumni, praised his verse more highly than his prose, and praised it liberally. Professor Morton, for instance, said: "There is no obscurity in the recent verses of Mr. Sherman, and their inspiration is of a high order. Here is abundance of poetic feeling and rich sympathy of mood." He goes on to observe that the form of the poems under discussion still needs the chisel, hammer, and file. In a later review he wrote: "The poet which Sainte-Beuve says is born in every one, is in him exceptionally vital. We beg him not to let it starve while seeking food for the outer man. Who knows but it may prove the longer-lived?"

Much of his verse is, naturally, imitative and shows the influence of poets whom he had been reading. His earliest contribution to the magazine, for instance, "Love's Paradox," is a

[17] Letter to Homer Woodbridge.

sonnet in the Elizabethan manner; "Gismonda" is a ballad bearing the mark of Keats; "Prayer of the Monk Eustace" is Tennysonian; "Proserpina on Earth" and "Penitence" are in the manner of Stephen Phillips, whom Stuart was then reading with enthusiasm. He also composed love lyrics, some lightly sentimental, some more serious. "The House of Glory" deals playfully with the conflict between love and ambition and the victory of love. Two songs celebrate the magic of "Blue Eyes." In a vein of more serious sentiment, "Her Roses Crown My Head" treats the age-old theme of the victory of love over death. The best and most charming of these lyrics, however, is "Flower-Gathering":

"Solitary questing violets
Through the valley sweet,
It was good to wander aimless,
It was best to meet!
Come, little lady with violet eyes,
No longer may we roam.
You shall entwine your flowers with mine.
The twilight calls us home.

'All the moorland way is easy,
Hand in hand is best,
Down the sunset's golden highway,
Through the golden West.
Haste, little lady with happy feet
Timed to the lilting lark,
Ere it be long, with laugh and song
We thread the forest dark.

"When we met this wondrous morning,
Did you dream or I
All the rough uncharted windings
'Neath that rosy sky?
See, little lady, the flowers we twined
In purple row on row
Still keep the dew of the dale where they grew
So long, long, long ago.

"We must mind to keep together
Through this woodland's night,
I can never hope to find you
Once you're out of sight.
Come, little lady with tired eyes,
Close to me, sweetheart mine,
Dark is the wold, the wind grows cold,
I hear the grey wolf whine.

"You are faint with fear and weary,
Lean upon me more;
Stronger, gayer I am growing,
Journey's nearly o'er.
Dear little lady with steadfast heart,
Sing! We are out of the gloam,
Bright through the wold, through dark and cold,
I see the lights of home!"

In serious occasional verse he was not at his best, and his class poem is for the most part undistinguished, though one stanza is touched with imagination:

"For vanished hours, like flocks of frightened birds,
Fly from their covert whirred by many wings,
With rise and rush of half forgotten things,
And flashing dreams too fleetly fair for words."[18]

With light verse and burlesque he was much more successful. Here, for instance, is the first stanza of "To a Picture of Dora" (a girl in a cigarette advertisement):

"Oh, all the lightfoot Latin belles
Sought out at eve by Roman swells
Among the empty fora,
And strolled with down the Palatine
Through swardy meads Transtiberine,
Until a sera hora,
Like stars before the orbèd moon
They pale and peak and pine eftsoon
Before thee, dulce Dora."[19]

[18] *Williams Literary Monthly*, October, 1903.
[19] *Williams Weekly*, May 3, 1901.

The most famous of these effusions was a satiric piece without signature in the "Gul," complaining of the ministrations of certain learned but humorless young instructors who had recently come to Williams with university imprimaturs. This skit had some reverberations in the faculty, and was even reported to have been cited as a reason for not reappointing two of the instructors concerned. It ran in part as follows:

"They have come with bag and baggage, Master, Doctor, nice degrees,
Twenty brand-new modern notions, proudly flaunted Kappa keys,
Modicum of worldly wisdom,—philosophic little band,
Trim and trigly filled and filed, but 'Lord, what do they understand?'

"'Every man must learn his business, learn with much of mess and muss,'
Right you are, but why in thunder must they learn their biz. on us?
'*In corpore vile* try your lancet,' runs the adage, 'hound or hog.'
Clinic of pin-feathered Doctors, did you take us for a dog?

"We are weary, very weary, of these up-and-coming men,
'Tis a froward generation, 'tis a race beyond our ken,
Give us some grey-headed scholar, bland and wise, with spirit clear,
Lest these brazen-handed children lead the Kosmos by the ear!

"Take, O take these kids away
That have kindergartenered here,
Let no more the breaking day
Nursery woes and wailings fear;
O give us to the howling heathen,
Howling heathen,
But not to kids to cut their teeth on,
Cut their teeth on."

This might be regarded as the first gun fired in Sherman's campaign against the fetish of the Ph. D.

His serious verse soon began to show originality in the freedom of its stride, and in the happy audacity of its phrase. California reminiscences color the fanciful "John-a-Dreams." "The Abiding City," along with its echoes of Shelley, has imaginative vigor of its own.

"In a city of thought all of marvels wrought,
Built as of bright moon-bars,
On whose citadel-height shine all the night
Cold turrets topped with stars,
Where space is a span to the great eye of man,
And time is a moment past,
Where the searching mind what it seeks may find,
Shall we rest, shall we rest at last?

. . . . . .

"Nay, ye shall rock in the thunder shock
In the livid heart of the storm,
In the dull earthquake shall your city shake
When the Hell-deep chasms form.
It shall plunge in its flight through the elder night
Into primeval chaos hurled,
It shall bear the scars of clashing stars
And the ash of a burnt-out world."

"A Modern Mood" expresses the rebellion described in the "Sturm und Drang" essay,[20] the bitterness of the vain search for a God who plays with mankind "his ancient childish game of hide and seek," and the defiance of such a God. The final stanza sounds a note of Stoic resolution which is the theme of some of the most individual of the poems. It appears again in "Polaris":

"On a lonely watch, with the wild waters free
And the wild winds blowing tempestuously,
How oft, his hard-earned course to mark,
Hath the Steersman's eye looked up to thee
While his reeling ship met the rising sea,
Then plunged straight onward through the dark!"

[20]See p. 101.

With a change of mood, the same idea is central in "Night-Faring":

> "'Astray to perish one by one?'
> But how if we be in the right?
> Against the splendid chance to run
> Eastward, and meet the rising sun,
> We take the hazard of the night."

Nothing that Stuart Sherman wrote in college is more deeply characteristic than these stanzas. That steersman plunging through the night with his eye on the North Star, that runner toward the dawn, are symbols of what was to become the central trait of his character—the resolute and exultant facing and conquest of difficulties in the pursuit of a great end.

One comes also upon a mood of darker brooding in a triolet composed in the summer of 1903.

> "The cake and wine you too may share,
> I keep the black bread for myself;
> For guests I set forth seemlier fare,
> The cake and wine you too may share,
> And all that lures upon the shelf,
> But of the black loaf pray beware
> The cake and wine you too may share,
> I keep the black loaf for myself."

The black loaf was always present in Stuart's cupboard, but it was not a part of his regular diet, and on vacation trips it was left behind. In "the bright unanxious air of the mountain top," he says in his essay on camping, "melancholy vanishes like a puff of smoke," and night on the mountain brings a deep peace. "There is no earthly calmness comparable to the tranquillity that glides at midnight out of the placid stellar depths into the little passion-tossed soul of man. The world and its limitations against which he has vainly dashed, the intricate net of circumstances in which he has vainly struggled, lie far below in the darkness. Here on the heights is room for the life he could not live in the valley." This sense of reconcilement with life does not

desert him when he returns to the old tasks. "A wide charity possesses him for the world and its shortcomings. He will not rail at fate, for fate, after all, he believes, has as hard a time as the rest of us trying to be good."

Sherman's stories probably cost him more effort than anything else he wrote, and they are certainly the least successful of his contributions to the "Lit." One is a melodramatic Russian anarchist tale, with a good plot rather unskilfully handled, and dialogue so crude as to suggest burlesque; the other is a love story colored with sophomoric cynicism. The essays are much more interesting. A study of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* would at once be picked out by anyone looking through Sherman's undergraduate work to find indications of his later tendencies. Though it shows no acquaintance with Tolstoy's other novels, it is in style and grasp a surprisingly mature piece of reviewing. It emphasizes strongly the social implications of the novel, defends its morality, and brings out through comparison with *My Confession* its autobiographical significance. The curious thing is that the essay stands alone; the others, "The Enditing of Letters" and "Camping in the Greenwood," are informal pieces written under the influence of Stevenson. Some passages from the first will give the reader a chance to compare Sherman's theory of letter-writing with his practice, and incidentally will show how strong was the Stevensonian spell upon him. Speaking of "the perfect letter," he says:

"Though it may be more studied than oral speech, it must appear no less impromptu. This indeed is its essential charm, that it contains the mind's first fruits with the bloom on. . . . This is the place for little buds of sentiment, short flights of poetry, wise sermons all in three lines, odd conceits, small jests rubbing noses with deacon-browed moralities, in short, for every fine extravagance in which the mind at play delights. . . .

"You will find some at perfect ease in conversation who, touching pen to paper, exhibit the affected primness commonly ascribed to the maiden aunt. They have not learned that this is the place where words must speak for themselves, without comment of inflection, gesture of the hand, or interpreting smile. Here to be unaffected one must take thought. As on the stage a natural hue must be obtained by unnatural means, by darkening the eyebrows and rouging the cheeks, so in the writing

of letters one must a trifle overdo in order to do but ordinarily. A word which rings on the lips with frank cordiality will stare coldly from the written page and must be heightened to avoid offense. . . . In speaking one frequently raps out a phrase whose literalness one's eyes warn the listener to question. These must be toned down or glossed. An example of the toned-down variety which illustrates as well men's fondness for assailing their friends with opprobrious epithets is offered by Darwin when he writes: 'I cannot conclude without telling you that of all blackguards you are the greatest and the best.' If Darwin had been talking face to face with Fox, he would doubtless have called him a blooming blackguard outright.

". . . An old correspondent will not always be turning his best side to the light. He knows that his more glaring faults are patent to his friends and, accepting the situation, he takes a certain pleasure in ventilating them. He feels that false modesty is folly between friends, and acting upon this conviction, he discusses his ego very cheerfully. . . ."

The essay ends appropriately with a glorification of Stevenson as a letter-writer.

Most of Stuart's letters to intimate friends show that he tried to approximate this ideal. Time and thought went into his letters. He could scarcely bring himself to write to a friend merely to communicate a fact; if he could not put into the letter a part of himself, he preferred not to write at all. His epistolary art did not always conceal itself successfully; but his best letters express his personality with a *vivida vis* and a fullness which few of his essays equal.

One of his editorials makes a plea for more interest in the intellectual side of college life, and contrasts the women's colleges favorably with the men's in this respect. There is incidental comment on teachers: "All too often the deep thorough scholars lie, like icebergs, with two-thirds of their bulk under water; the students can get no idea of their stature and importance as men. The lighter craft are better sailers and make more display, but they command slight respect. The ideal teacher, happily not unknown, is, to elaborate the figure, a man-of-war on a holiday, flags and banners flying, decks polished like a dance-hall, everything gay and festive, but, behind the maskings, the grim and effectual guns. When the student sights

such a ship, he would like nothing better than to rig up his little scow after the fashion of it."[21]

One more bit of Sherman's prose deserves notice here—his commencement oration, "Sturm und Drang." Its subject is the rebellion of passionately idealistic youth against the limitations of reality and the imperfections of the world—youth's "inordinate longing, baffled endeavor, all-pervading bitterness." The first distinction of the essay is a finely sympathetic description of this spirit of rebellion; the second is a clear recognition of its futility. "With one consent these baffled rebels bear witness to the ultimate fruitlessness of rebellion. Yet you may find every day a young Samson Agonistes, who is so thoroughly convinced that the earth is burdened with wretches cursed with an imperfect destiny that, if he could have his will, he would lay hold of the central pillars of the world and overwhelm himself with it in universal ruin." Stuart himself, in certain moods which were rather frequent in his college days, was such a young Samson. With a kind of dark exultation he had read the grim chapter in which Hardy's Jude quotes Job's great curse of the day on which he was born. But his grasp of life was too strong to allow him to be contented with a romantically pessimistic philosophy, and he was always keenly aware of its futility. The concluding paragraph of "Sturm und Drang" quotes Marcus Aurelius: "Live with the gods; and he does live with the gods who constantly shows to them that his own soul is satisfied with that which is assigned to him." He protests against calling this acceptance of destiny by the name of resignation. "Is it resignation to exchange rancor for joy, rebellion for peace, impotent despair for a strong and energizing faith? All the god-powers of a man are not too great to expend upon that portion of the universe which is assigned to him. In accepting his portion a man becomes for the first time master of it. The broad highway out of the storm and stress is this: to welcome life on the terms in which it is tendered, and laying hold on the best of it, whole heartedly to live for it, manfully to fight for it, and joyfully to die for it." The influence of Dr. Bascom's teaching is clearly visible in these concluding sentences. The oration won a compliment of an unusual sort in a letter from Rollo Ogden, editor

[21]The quotation is from a slightly revised version of this editorial, which was handed in as a theme in Dean Briggs's course at Harvard.

of the New York *Evening Post.* "It was a performance," Mr. Ogden wrote, "which must have strengthened the confidence which I hear your instructors have in your powers; and even to a stranger like myself it appealed in a way to make me follow your future career with interest."

The question of a career had already, indeed, become a matter of some concern by the time these words were spoken. Sherman had definitely made up his mind that he wanted to be a teacher of literature, and when a request came to Williams from Professor Thomas Arkle Clark of the University of Illinois for a promising young man to fill a position as instructor in Rhetoric and English Literature, Professor Maxcy cordially recommended Sherman. Professor Clark thereupon entered into a correspondence with Sherman, whose letters, he subsequently said, were "so original, so clever, so human, and so generally interesting that I made up my mind, if possible, to bring him to the university." The position in question was an instructorship at a salary of $800—at that time an exceptionally good chance for a young man almost without teaching experience and just out of college. Sherman was attracted by the opportunity, though not very anxious to commit himself to Illinois. His attitude at this time toward teaching in the West is of some interest. He took pains to assure Professor Clark that he had no inbred Eastern bias and felt no shock at the thought of so distant a call, adding it as his impression that in hospitality, energy, and progressiveness the East could take many lessons from the West. But before the appointment could be made an opportunity was opened to Sherman for three years of uninterrupted graduate study at Harvard, and his decis on in the situation was inevitable. The correspondence, however, was not without its important effects, for it produced such an impression on Dean Clark that he determined not to lose sight of the young scholar, and the ultimate result was his appointment to the department in which virtually the whole of his career as a teacher was spent.

CHAPTER VII

HARVARD TEACHERS AND FRIENDS

IN THE summer of 1903, Sherman was looking forward with lively anticipation to the prospect of work at Harvard in his chosen field. Largely through Professor Morton's influence he had received a Thompson scholarship—one of several special grants to promising graduates of Williams—for three years of advanced study. This carried an annual stipend of five hundred dollars, at the time nearly enough to cover a man's expenses at Harvard if he lived with strict economy. It was supplemented during Sherman's second and third years by scholarships from the university, awarded in recognition of his excellent record. These aids made it possible for him to complete his graduate training without incurring debts or interrupting his studies to earn the means of going on.

It was necessary for him, however, especially during the first year, to live as inexpensively as possible. He and his friend Woodbridge took two attic rooms in a house at 30 Sacramento Street, occupied by a Russian Jewish tailor named Bornstein. Economy was the principal motive in the choice, but it proved a good one; the rooms were comfortable, and the landlord and his family honest and kindly. Board could be obtained at cost at Randall, one of the student dining halls controlled by the university. The chief objection to the place was its noisiness; at rush hours, when several hundred men were eating, the racket was indescribable. In his second and third years, when the need for thrift was not quite so pressing, Sherman generally took his meals at one of the restaurants near the Square.

He liked the Bornsteins well enough to continue rooming in their house as long as he stayed in Cambridge. In 1904–1905, Woodbridge having left the university, he remained at 30 Sacramento Street with two other Williams friends who were in the law school, Charley Turell and Pat Callan, and a new Harvard friend, Malcolm McLeod. In 1905 the Bornsteins

moved to 51 Oxford Street, and the four friends took rooms in their new house. The landlord's peculiarities of idiom and his naïveté were frequent sources of amusement.

Sherman's choice of courses for that year was a fortunate one. Besides Dean Briggs's English 12, he had Professor Kittredge's course in Shakespeare, Professor Baker's in English drama before 1642, and Dr. Neilson's in Chaucer. It may be doubted whether any university has offered better fare to an eager young student of literature. These men differed widely in personality and method; but all of them had not only commanding mastery of their fields, but admirable force and skill as teachers.

Dr. Neilson by no means ignored philology, but he taught Chaucer's poetry as poetry, with contagious gusto and humor. To hear him read, with his slightly burry Scottish accent and his huge enjoyment, the Prologue, or the "Tale of Sir Thopas," or the Prologue to "The Legend of Good Women," was an experience to be treasured in memory. No one could come out of that course—with whatever emotions he had entered it—except as a lover of Chaucer. Neilson gave his class a great deal of information about Chaucer's language, sources, and times, but he never forgot that the most important thing to do with Chaucer is to enjoy him. He had none of the pedantry or solemnity of scholarship. When someone asked him about the precession of the equinoxes, he said: "That is a matter I understand only once a year; and this is not the time when I understand it!"

In 1903–1904 Professor Baker had not yet transferred his main interest to the teaching of dramatic composition; and his course in English drama was probably at its best. His lectures were unsystematic and seldom carefully organized, but they were immensely stimulating. Whether he was discussing the Towneley dramatist "X," or John Lyly, or Francis Beaumont, he treated them as living men working at definite and fascinating problems. In general he stressed stage conditions and technique rather than literary quality, but he was never blind to the appeal of poetry or style. It was part of his method always to assume that his students knew a great many things which he must have been reasonably sure were outside their ken; he was always making them ashamed of their ignorance, with the result that they spent more time in reading for that

course than for any other. Sherman often read the complete works of an author only one or two of whose plays were formally required. He was so keenly interested in the course that he chose from among the dramatists studied a subject for his doctoral dissertation (the plays of John Ford), and later wrote the thesis under Professor Baker's direction.

Professor Kittredge's famous course in Shakespeare was an admirable complement to this study of pre-Elizabethan and Elizabethan drama. Professor Baker gave his classes a rapid view of a wide field, generalizing, pointing out literary relationships and tendencies, tracing the development and decadence of a great artistic form. He paid no attention to difficulties of language; students had to figure these out for themselves as best they could. He was constantly stimulating them to read outside and all round the course. Professor Kittredge confined his attention chiefly to six important plays, the text of which he interpreted with detailed and illuminating comment. Members of the class were expected to know those plays almost by heart, so that they could instantly identify a line or a phrase from any of them; they were expected to know by heart also all of Professor Kittredge's comments. "The object of this course," he announced at the beginning, "is to learn what Shakespeare said and what he meant by what he said." The class was not especially urged to read other plays of Shakespeare, or to read around the subject. They were directed at the beginning of the course to go to the reference shelves in the library and "scrutinize the backs of the books." Some of these books were commended, though with sharp qualifications; but "nine-tenths of what has been written about Shakespeare is either useless or wrong." The only books assigned for reading, besides the six plays, were Dowden's *Shakespeare Primer* and Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*. Little or no attention was paid to stage conditions, to dramatic technique, or to literary history.

Such negations, however, would give an entirely false impression of the course. Professor Kittredge amply justified what might seem the narrow limitation of his objectives by the brilliance and completeness of his attainment of them. His commentary, characterized by a sort of inspired common sense, illuminated every corner of those six plays and impressed them not only upon the memories but upon the imaginations

of his pupils. It is quite untrue to say, as has sometimes been said, that the course was largely philological. Now and then Professor Kittredge paused to give an interesting glimpse of an episode in the biography of a word; but all these bits of word history bore directly on his main purpose. He gave much time to the discussion and interpretation of the characters, with occasional praise or pungent criticism of the acting of famous performers. The course left with the student a sense of intimate acquaintance with the characters and the plays, and an understanding of Elizabethan English which enabled him to go on reading Shakespeare and his contemporaries intelligently.

It also provided, through the vivid personality of the teacher and the occasionally startling displays of temperament, an unending source of entertainment not unmixed with terror. For Sherman, who had the keenest relish for strongly marked individuality, these personal fireworks added greatly to the interest and value of the course. He studiously recorded them among his notes, upon which he drew years later for his essay on Professor Kittredge in the *Nation*.[1]

This article was by a good many readers seriously misunderstood. It is not, as one newspaper called it, a personal attack; it is rather a personal tribute to Professor Kittredge, combined with a vigorous assault on his theory of training graduate students in English and upon the results of that theory. If the first half of the article had been published separately it would have been recognized by everyone for what it is—a brilliant portrait of a great teacher and a great personality. It stresses some of Professor Kittredge's eccentricities, as any good portrait must, but it stresses equally the splendid vigor of his teaching, the perfect mastery with which he handles his enormous learning, his generous interest in his students, and his potent charm. The description of the Shakespeare course includes an account of "a bad quarter of an hour," which was, however, "like Purgatory, very salutary." The essay proceeds to describe the vigorous brushing into the dustbin of all sorts of sentimental, moralizing, and cobwebby interpretations, and outlines a typical meeting of the class: "The session ordinarily began with five or ten minutes during which we called out questions on the

[1] *Nation*, September 8, 1913; reprinted in *Shaping Men and Women*.

difficult points in the previous day's reading. These he answered instantly, always without consulting the book, and succinctly or copiously as the case required. For the next ten or fifteen minutes he subjected us to a grilling examination on whatever we had prepared for the day. For the rest of the hour he commented with racy phrase and startling illustration, and left the room at the last minute, talking all the way down the aisle and halfway down the stairs." Any former member of English 2, though he read those four sentences in China, would be back in the big drafty room in Harvard Hall, watching with fascinated interest the Olympian figure behind the desk.

But the finest tribute in the essay is in the sketch of Kittredge in his relations with graduate students. "Jupiter Tonans gave way to benignant Jove, a being of equal or greater fascination, but with all his terrors laid by, alert, omniscient as it seemed, a hawk-eyed critic still, but of princely amenity, tireless helpfulness, and the cordialest interest in one's personal destiny. . . .

"Best of all were the ever-memorable individual conferences, when the candidate, now going heavily with his dissertation, visited the arbiter of his fate by special appointment at some hour not far from midnight, and came upon him, in the midst of his study, seated at the center of a great half moon of tomes and treatises, and enveloped and clouded, like a god, in infinite smoke. You began the interview with a half-hour of wizardry, during which, while you helped thicken the smoke, he told you of the smoking customs of barbarians or poured out odd stories of witchcraft and alchemy in New England. Then you explained your difficulties and he cleared them up, or you told him what you were hunting for, and he pulled out of some recess or other a box full of references bearing exactly upon the point, and filed away months or years before, when he was working upon the same topic. You returned to your labors with a persuasion that there was no topic which had not, on one occasion or another, engaged his attention."

The latter half of the essay is frankly controversial, and the controversy need not be discussed here. It is surely obvious, however, that a man may regard the character and personality of another with sincere admiration, yet have a firm conviction that the other's influence has been unfortunate or disastrous. All strong assertive leaders, such as President Eliot or President

Roosevelt, arouse in many acute and honest minds such a mixture of emotions. The reason why many of Kittredge's pupils chose to regard the essay as an attack on him was that it was really an attack on them, as products of the system of graduate training for which his influence was in a large degree responsible. The real sting of the article was in the pictures of these products—"the newly fledged philologist at work, teaching composition (an art which he has never practiced)," and "aspiring instructors publishing in the learned journals first-hand comments on medieval syntax, etymology, and beast fable, and uttering in their classrooms third and fourth-hand comments on Milton, Dryden, and Tennyson."

All this, of course, in 1903–1904 lay in the future. For the present Sherman was taking pains to miss no meeting of English 2, and was enthusiastically accumulating notes on lectures and lecturer.

The most delightful of all these courses, and the one upon which he spent most time and energy, was English 12, Dean Briggs's course in composition. The actual quantity of writing required was considerable; Sherman's themes, which he preserved largely for the sake of Dean Briggs's comments, amount to between forty and fifty thousand words, without counting numerous completely rewritten versions. He composed slowly and laboriously, sometimes spending several hours on a one or two page theme. He first worked out a general plan (usually without committing it to paper), and then composed the theme by paragraphs, not writing a word until he had a whole paragraph definitely in mind. He seldom made a second draft of a theme before handing it in. He followed the same general method in most of his later writing; the process of composition was always slow and difficult, but when the article or review was once on paper it was done.

Dean Briggs's plan required the class to write daily themes five days a week during most of the year, and longer ones at intervals of about two weeks. Various types—"a familiar essay," "a critical essay," "a ghost story," "a love story"—were specified for the longer papers. In the short themes there was absolute freedom as to choice of type and topic, verse or prose. The plan was flexible; with the dean's consent a student could substitute one type of long paper for another, or could

hand in a long theme in lieu of several short ones. One of Sherman's earlier papers describes his difficulty in choosing a topic and in writing: "It is very like a man who must walk every night down a narrow lane, knowing for certain that before he reaches his journey's end a dreadful highwayman will spring from the darkness and holding the cold muzzle of a revolver against his shuddering temples will hiss: 'Talk for five minutes in elegant and coherent English or you are a dead man!' . . . It is most like the young prince, from whom each day the savage king's executioner wrenched a tooth. The daily agony is terrible; but, when the teeth are gone, what next?" A later theme complains of the unchartered freedom of choice as to subject and manner: "the demand in English 12 is desperately catholic." The polarizing influence of a theory based on a definite "market" would be helpful. "If I were aspiring to celebrity in the *Smart Set* I should submit something light and naughty; but if Mr. Bliss Perry should urge me to honor the classic columns of the *Atlantic Monthly*, I should gird up the loins of my spirit and, invoking the highest and holiest traditions of my country, I should write something with a starward bias, something that would tend to set the national ideals one peg higher." It is curious that when a later editor of the *Atlantic* did solicit contributions from him he should so literally and exactly have fulfilled this mocking promise, the spirit of which is anything but didactic.

However much he complained about the difficulties of theme writing, Sherman thoroughly enjoyed conquering them. But the best part of the course was the weekly meeting of the class. Here was the real "market" for a man's writing. Here some thirty young fellows, all vastly interested in writing and keenly critical of each other's work, listened while the dean read an honored and selected few of their essays, poems, and stories, and waited their chance to damn or praise. Edward Sheldon was in that class, and Harry James Smith, and Paxton Hibben and Henry Bellows. Sitting there at the desk with his long legs twisted impossibly around the base of his swivel chair, the dean read the themes quietly, sympathetically, humorously. Sometimes when he had finished he would look up and make a brief pointed comment, perhaps in the form of a question: "Mr. Sherman, don't you sometimes yearn to know what your

poems mean?" But generally he would ask members of the class for their judgments, which were often contradictory and always very positive—and then combine, modify, and reconcile them with such persuasive reasonableness that everyone except the most rabid would feel that perfect justice had been done. His serenity was never ruffled. When, after he had read a bit of Stuart's verse, a student solemnly inquired: "Don't you think, sir, that poem would give a fine opportunity to a good reader?" the dean's face only wrinkled into smiles innumerous as the ocean's. He was always "there," both literally and in his own special sense of the word. Once, after he had been in an accident, he came with one arm in a sling and his head swathed in bandages. He read and commented in writing on every theme written in the course and discussed them individually with the writers in conferences; at the end of the year he seemed to remember every theme. He seemed also to sympathize with the purpose of nearly everything his students tried to do and to be chiefly concerned in helping them to attain it. "He imposed nothing on his class," Sherman wrote later, "but a light touch of the spur, a nudge, a slight touch on the rein. He gave them their heads and let them gallop. . . . I think the majority of them would have thought an 'A' from him a finer distinction than a check from the *Century*. When we pleased him we felt that we could quote the great Sophoclean line: 'I know I please the souls I ought to please.'"[2]

Dean Briggs's principal criticism of Sherman's writing concerned its over-literary quality—its fondness for far-fetched words and figures and for "aureate" diction. At the outset of the course he wrote on the theme describing "Toningham":[3] "Keep a careful hand on yourself, distinguishing the sincerely literary from the overdone, and severely cutting out the latter. You have a style that will be delightful if you prune it and will run to seed if you don't." Comments on some later themes are "Color too thick," "Vigorous and not much overdone," "Your mind is so fertile that you may well look out for weeds," "Right here you begin to be good and continue so for two lines." A long comment on a theme written toward the middle of the

[2]"Dean Briggs: The Beautiful Dean from the Life," in *The Main Stream*. p. 106.

[3]Quoted in part on p. 91.

year, charging Sherman with "unwillingness to say a plain thing in a plain way," nettled him a little; he wrote two new versions, labeling one "slightly revised" and the other "purged of all earthly passion—all figurative language removed." This process of chastening had excellent results; Stuart shook off in the course of the year much of his Stevensonian preciosity, and his later themes were seldom criticized for such faults. He confessed to the dean "that at the beginning of the year, he had thought no sentence of his good till he had introduced a figure of speech."[4] He confesses in *The Main Stream* how vividly he remembers the dean's critical phrases: "There was something unforgettable in the *obiter dicta* of that classroom. A generation has gone by since the dean wrote 'falsely robust' against the phrase 'the dugs of sensualism,' used by a boy who was attempting to express his feeling about the gargoyles of Notre Dame. It is twenty-two years since I walked by the high brick wall into Harvard Square with the writer of that theme,[5] and yet to this day I cannot employ any of the more 'brutal' Anglo-Saxon words without pausing at least for a moment to consider whether it is not 'falsely robust.'"

For most of the narratives scheduled in the course Sherman substituted essays, but he wrote one story to which the dean gave high praise. "The Whole Duty of Man" is a study in conflicting loyalties. The hero, a young doctor, penniless and ambitious, has just learned that the girl to whom he has been engaged for several years has become totally blind. His best friend, an older man, strongly advises him to break the engagement on the ground that marriage would handicap him and bring unhappiness upon his wife as well. He admits that he has already reached the same conclusion. When he goes to see the girl she tries to send him away on the ground that she no longer loves him; but he, of course, sees through this magnanimous pretense and refuses to accept the sacrifice. He even assures her that he has had no doubts; no question of the wisdom of their marriage has ever entered his head. The story shows much greater skill in the handling of narrative and dialogue than any of Sherman's earlier attempts at fiction, and in vari-

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[4]Letter from Dean Briggs to Homer Woodbridge.

[5]Harry James Smith.

ous ways looks forward to some of the "Cornelia" sketches. The irony of the conclusion is highly characteristic.

A minority of the themes deal with literary subjects, and of these as many are concerned with foreign writers as with English. There is an acute study of "The Pessimism of Thackeray," and an interesting group of imaginary love letters supposed to have been addressed by Dryden to the actress Mrs. Reeve. There is a condemnation of Kipling for his lack of idealism, and of Mr. W. B. Yeats, who had just lectured in Cambridge, for his fight with the Zeitgeist. Among the more notable of the longer papers are a thoughtful study of the *Vita Nuova*, an enthusiastic appreciation of Propertius, and a brilliant portrait of Benvenuto Cellini.[6] Many of the shorter sketches are reminiscent, and many moral or philosophical. Some of these give vivid glimpses of personal traits. One entitled "Quixotism," for instance, ends thus: "What if we fail nine times? Perhaps the tenth time we shall succeed. Let us attempt vain things. The Ruler of the Universe likes young men who attempt the impossible, and once in a great while he lets them achieve it, perhaps out of pure disgust for the cautious praters who attempt nothing at all."

A letter to his mother, written at the beginning of his second year, reflects his satisfaction in his work and life at Harvard, as well as his affectionate care for her.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

Oct. 5, 1904.

DEAR MOTHER:

I hope that vaccination or X (cause unknown) is not going to trouble you. I suppose you are being around on your feet too too many long hours. You ought to have an hour selected after every meal or thereabout in which to lie down and recuperate. This is very highly recommended by the best authorities—and if you must laugh and inquire where you are to find the hours, why, 15 minutes is very much better than nothing. We have all been in excellent health down here, walking and

[6] An essay published in the *Mentor*, October, 1926, is based partly on this paper.

eating and working with gusto and enthusiasm. I have six fine courses at present on my card—plenty to read and think about. If all goes well this year my teaching capital ought to rise several per cent by the end of the year. This educating business strikes me just now as an excellent investment, and I take back nearly everything I've said against it. . . .

Thank you, mother dear, for the check; I shall take great pleasure in lighting a pipe with it—it will give me a delicious sense of luxury—and the birthday *remembrance* I shall keep always—that's the main thing. . . .

30 Sacramento is very nice. We have our large study and two bedrooms, one of which can be used as a retiring-room for study when the main place is full or noisy. . . .

I hope your "at home" came off nicely. Do tell me about it. Very clever idea indeed (you will understand that I am thankful I wasn't there).

It looks to me very much as if no one else can work out anyone's else salvation. How does it look to you? Much love to you all.

STUART.

Certain difficulties connected with the choice of his courses Stuart naturally did not trouble his mother about. In his first theme in English 12 (an "Introduction to the Instructor"), he had written: "My bent, if I have any, is for literature and not language. I say this with conviction after several years spent very pleasantly in the study of Latin, French, German, Italian, and Greek. The acquirement of the languages I have not disliked; yet I have always been eager to leave the grammar behind and press on to the literature. A comparison of the Latin with the French drama would interest me greatly; but a comparison of the Latin with the French verb fails to allure me. When I read that a man received a Ph. D. for investigation of the *cum* clauses in Cicero, I draw a breath of relief that my feet are not entangled in that net. I have as yet no zeal for linguistics, and I make it part of my prayer to be delivered from that peril." At the beginning of his second year, however, he saw the net spread before him. "When the candidate for the higher degree unfolded to the Department his plans and desires for work in modern literature, a majestic figure waved him to a more re-

moved ground."[7] In his first year Sherman's courses had covered no literature later than 1642 except for some reading in Dryden assigned by Dean Briggs. He wished now to take a number of courses in more recent literature; but he found that the requirements for the degree of Ph. D. made it necessary for him to spend a large part of his time in the study of Anglo-Saxon, Beowulf, comparative grammar, Middle English, Old French, and Gothic. Additional linguistic courses were recommended, but these were at the time the irreducible minimum; and these, with the writing of his doctoral dissertation, would normally require at least three fourths of his time for the next two years. He might, of course, have turned his back on the degree and taken the courses he really wanted. One of his friends did this; another left Harvard after the first year. For various reasons Sherman did not feel that he could properly give up the prospect of the degree. As a holder of a Thompson scholarship, it seemed incumbent on him to make good according to the standards of the University. He was anxious to marry as soon as possible and rightly felt that it was wiser to finish his academic preparation before marriage. Characteristically he tried to solve the problem by carrying an enormous amount of work. He registered for six courses in 1904–1905, but was officially advised by the department that so heavy a schedule was unwise. He then technically dropped two of the courses but continued to attend them as an "auditor" and to do most of the assigned work. The upshot was that for the second year his program was in the main literary. He took half-year courses in Anglo-Saxon and Beowulf with Professors Schofield and Kittredge, the drama since 1642 with Professor Baker, Nineteenth Century literature with Dr. Carleton Brown, and year courses in Greek drama in translation with Professor J. W. White and the history of criticism with Professor Babbitt. He attended also a course in historical grammar given by Professor Robinson and courses in the literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries given by Professor Wendell and Mr. Copeland. Since a different group of plays was being studied in Professor Kittredge's Shakespeare course this year, he visited that, too, as an auditor. In his third year he was occupied chiefly

[7] "Professor Kittredge," in *Shaping Men and Women*, p. 83.

in the preparation of his thesis. He took the course in Gothic, and attended Professor Sheldon's course in Old French and Professor Babbitt's in Rousseau and his influence.

The courses in the literature of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth centuries were of a somewhat elementary sort, given to large classes mainly of undergraduates, and he found them more or less disappointing, though Dr. Brown's lectures were excellent for their purpose, and the personalities of Wendell and Copeland were entertaining. Sherman's recollections of Wendell appear in an article[8] written twenty years later. "He entered the lecture room with a cane, in a cutaway coat and spats, with the air of an Anglicized Boston man of letters who had crossed the Charles to speak to the boys about life. As he proceeded to his desk we noticed that his hair was parted down the back of his head to his collar. He plucked his glasses from their hook somewhere about his waistcoat, and diddling them on the end of his forefinger, began to speak in his highly mannered voice, with frequent breaks into falsetto. . . . The formal dress, decorous aspect, and little affectations of the man were in delicious contrast with [his] opening speech, and indeed with the entire point of view in the course. The man's mind was lucid, honest, virile, burly and absolutely untrammeled."

Of the philological courses, the only one which Sherman enjoyed keenly was Professor Kittredge's Beowulf. Kittredge's teaching in this course was masterly, and he was much more approachable than in English 2; but the thunderbolt was not out of reach. Stuart records in his diary the first meeting of the class: "First to recite in Beowulf. Several of the youths had no books. Grendel in wrath dons hat and coat and rages from the room."[9] Old French and Gothic were an almost unmitigated bore. This was partly on account of the methods and personalities of the instructors. Unfortunately for Sherman, Professor von Jagemann, who generally gave the course in Gothic, was ill that year, and his place was taken by a substitute. Von Jagemann was an admirable teacher, who gave life to his rather blood ess subject; but the substitute was simply and incurably dull. In Old French, Professor Sheldon, a very

[8] *Critical Woodcuts*, pp. 244–257.

[9] February 15, 1905.

distinguished scholar but an almost unendurable teacher, spent an endless time over minutiæ, and his mind was of so skeptical a turn that he could rarely be induced to utter an unqualified declarative sentence. The assigned reading included some delightful poems, but the classroom exercises were as remote from poetry as if the subject of the course had been farm fertilizers. As an exposition of philological law, moreover, Professor Sheldon's teaching was slow, hesitant, and unskilful. It is necessary to tell the painful truth about these courses, because it partly accounts for the acerbity of Sherman's later attack on the requirements for the Ph. D. at Harvard. It was not the difficulty of the work that he resented; the course in Old French, for instance, was very easy for a man who had his grasp of modern French and Latin. It was rather the necessity of giving up courses which he greatly desired and knew would be useful for courses which he believed relatively useless and knew were insufferable bores. He said to Dean Briggs after about three months of this kind of work, "I feel as if I had sold myself to the devil."[10]

To compensate for the unprofitable hours spent in the Old French and Gothic classrooms, however, Sherman found in his work with Professor Babbitt the most powerful intellectual stimulus which he had encountered in his college and university training. Babbitt was the first and last of his teachers who was primarily and almost exclusively interested in ideas; Stuart always had a deep thirst for ideas and a capacity to become intoxicated by them. In the criticism course, which began with Aristotle, Babbitt's method seemed for a time to be inductive; he seemed to be working his way toward the formulation of critical standards which should be firmly based and universal. Sherman followed him with growing excitement and with increasingly enthusiastic discipleship. Actually, of course, Babbitt's method is largely deductive, and his argument is ultimately based on "the intuition that is above the reason"—which is to be carefully distinguished from the intuition (or instinct) which is subrational. By what standard he determined which direction was "above" and which "below" some students never could make out. Sherman, however, was not disposed to

[10]Letter from Dean Briggs to Homer Woodbridge.

cavil on such points; he was enthusiastically following the trail of a great teacher into a far-reaching system of ideas, which seemed to give new meaning to life and literature. His own description[11] of Professor Babbitt's teaching gives the best possible account of its effect on him:

"At that time he had very small classes—meeting around a table. He came in with a bag bursting full of books, and took out a handful of notes which he arranged around him.—Began to sway in his chair, then leaped out upon one of them and poured a barrage of criticism upon some doctrine or some line of poetry,—'to cast o'er erring words and deeds a heavenly show'—Buddha, Aristotle, Plato, Horace, Dante, Montaigne, Pascal, Milton, etc.—etc.

"He deluged you with wisdom of the world; his thoughts were unpacked and poured out so fast you couldn't keep up with them. You didn't know what he was talking about, but you felt that he was extremely in earnest, that it was tremendously important, that some time it would count; that he was uttering dogmatically things that cut into your beliefs, disposed derisively of what you adored, driving you into a reconstruction of your entire intellectual system. He was at you day after day like a battering ram, knocking down your illusions. He was building up a system of ideas.

"You never felt for a moment that he was a pedagogue teaching pupils. You felt that he was a Coleridge, a Carlyle, a Buddha, pouring out the full-stuffed cornucopia of the world upon your head. You were no longer in the elementary class. You were with a man who was seeking through literature for illustrations of his philosophy of life. You were dealing with questions on the answer to which the welfare of nations and civilization depended. He himself seemed to know the right answer and was building a thoroughfare of ideas from the Greeks to our own day.

"You went out of the room laden down with general ideas that he had made seem tremendously important. . . . He related for you a multitude of separate and apparently disconnected tendencies to the great central currents of thought. You carried away also a sense of the need for immense reading. He had given

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[11]Quoted in *Shaping Men and Women*, Introduction, p. xxi.

you theses about literature, about life, which you would spend a lifetime in verifying."

Professor Babbitt belongs emphatically to the lawgiving type of teacher—the type which gathers disciples and founds a school of thought. To many of his pupils—as to Sherman, for a time—his militant humanism became almost a substitute for religion. In the classroom he never argued; if you raised any objection to his opinions he reiterated them in more detail and pointed out your error—that is, the point at which you had wandered from his doctrines. In the certainty of his convictions, the smashing common sense of his judgments, the burly authority of his manner, and his gift of pungent phrase he often recalled Dr. Johnson. If you happened to disagree with him you did not especially relish these Johnsonian traits. For the time Sherman unqualifiedly accepted his principles, but he occasionally disagreed as to their application. One difference of opinion concerned the quality of Walter Pater, whom Babbitt condemned as fundamentally romantic. Sherman insisted that he was essentially classic and argued the point in a carefully written term paper, without, however, converting Professor Babbitt. It was a theory of Babbitt's that one can often find indications of the leading traits of an author by running through his work and noticing the words and phrases of which he is especially fond. Applying this process to Pater, he found a special significance in Pater's frequent use of the words "sweet" and "sweetness." Sherman's recollection of the matter, jotted down in a notebook as a hint for a possible opening of an essay on Pater, amusingly illustrates the importance of the question whose ox is being gored. He enjoyed seeing the goring process applied to Shelley or Ruskin; but Pater was one of *his* oxen.

"I remember writing an essay on Pater for my master, who was an austere man; his voice had an edge like a stone-cutter's saw. He hadn't been attracted by Pater. . . . He summoned me to an interview. The book (*Marius*) lay in his lap. As he talked with me, he showed me the book, and thumbed the pages. He turned them. I could see that he had cut the pages—torn them open here and there—and had read with a soft blunt pencil in his hand.—Whenever he came to a passage of a certain sort he had jabbed a coarse line under it.—He ran through hunting for these jabs . . . with a snort. . . .

"I said, 'Each time that phrase appears in Pater it is coupled with strength. You never divined that your strength is as obnoxious to me as Pater's sweetness is to you. What charms me in Pater is precisely the union of sweetness and strength.'"

In spite of such minor rebellions, it may fairly be said that the direction of Sherman's interest and the main course of his thinking for several years were largely determined by Professor Babbitt's influence. Up to this time, on the whole, his chief interest in the work at Harvard had been in the drama; he had taken three dramatic courses, and had chosen to write his doctoral dissertation, under Professor Baker's direction, on the plays of John Ford. After finishing the dissertation, however, he gave relatively little attention to the study and criticism of drama; aside from his work on Ford,[12] he published nothing in this field except an edition of *Coriolanus*. He was still interested in drama, but he was vastly more interested in the general criticism of literary tendencies and ideas in accordance with Professor Babbitt's standards. Babbitt's influence was reinforced by that of Mr. Paul E. More, his friend and ally, to whose essays he frequently directed his classes and whom he invited Sherman to meet in person at his house.

In Babbitt's lectures Sherman found the basis of his critical philosophy—the distinction between "law for man" and "law for thing," and the supremacy, in human life, of the "law for man"; the essential importance in human nature of the principle of selection, exclusion, negation—the "inner check"; the belief that "man is the measure of all things" is true only if "man" means "representative or universal man," not "individual man"; the appeal for authority to the experience of the human race; the distrust on the one hand of naturalism and on the other of Arcadian romance as essential misrepresentations of humanity. Sherman's earlier critical work is founded upon this doctrine.

Life at Cambridge was by no means all study and high thinking. There was a congenial group of Williams men in the graduate school and the law school who saw much of each other and found a good deal of time for recreation. Charley Turell

[12]He edited two of Ford's plays and published two or three short articles in learned magazines.

and Pat Callan were there during Stuart's three years and roomed with him during the last two. Harry Smith, Homer Woodbridge, and Sam Allen were studying English in 1903–1904, Madison Bates in 1904–1905, Woodbridge again in 1905–1906. The rooms at 30 Sacramento Street and 51 Oxford Street became a sort of informal Williams gathering place, visited occasionally by a good many other Williams graduates in the neighborhood. Stuart made a few friends from other colleges, but only one of them, Malcolm McLeod, was intimately associated with him. In general the Williams men were sufficient unto themselves and not much disposed to attempt breaking down the Harvard graduate's wall of self-sufficiency. They thus missed the opportunity to make many interesting acquaintances; in later years Sherman was often surprised by the discovery that some new friend had been a contemporary at Harvard. But a graduate student must limit the time he gives to social activities, and when he finds himself among pleasant companions he is not likely to seek further. Stuart and his friends walked all round the environs of Cambridge; they made pilgrimages to Lexington and Concord and other places of historic and literary interest, and were especially delighted with Walden Pond, as yet unprofaned by electric lights and ice-cream stands. In the spring they played tennis; in the fall a "kicking game" of football on Norton Field or the Common; in the winter they boxed and bowled. Stuart was a formidable boxer, though he would never hit a lighter opponent very hard. Only occasionally did he meet anyone who forced him to exert his strength. One entry in his diary records: "Boxed seven rounds with Ken Clark to a draw." They frequently walked into Boston for supper and prided themselves on their acquaintance with the foreign restaurants—German, French, Italian, Chinese, Turkish. When they were in a hurry, or in a mood to economize, they ate at Gridley's; if they had time and money, they were likely to go to a place where they could get a good steak and German beer, such as Charley or Jake Wirth's or Zum Bürger Brau. A curious incident once happened at the latter. Five or six young fellows, including Stuart, were sitting at a table with their beer and arguing rather noisily about something. There was a momentary lull in the talk, and an old gentleman sitting alone at a neighboring table said very distinctly,

but quietly as if to himself: "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice." Later, when some of the party had gone, the others invited him to come over and join them. He was a strikingly handsome old man, with beautiful white hair and a sweeping white mustache; he looked like a retired field marshal. He said that he was a "professional gambler and a soldier of fortune"; also that he understood phrenology. "Now about you," he said to one of the group, "you may get hold of a bright idea sometime and burnish it up to a success; but your friend there"—he made an impressive gesture toward Stuart—"with that forehead—three stories high! He will have a great career!"

Stuart and his friends spent much time in long discussions of literary, ethical, and philosophical questions, sometimes after supper at an inn, sometimes in their rooms. They called themselves the "New Mermaid" club, and with a noble disregard of chronology nicknamed each other from some fanciful resemblance to the great of various periods. Stuart was Ben Jonson, on account of his dogmatic and sometimes dictatorial method of argument; Charley Turell was Francis Bacon, because of his worldly wisdom, prudence, and legal learning; Madison Bates was the moral bard George Herbert; Malcolm McLeod was Beau Brummel; Homer Woodbridge was Montaigne; Pat Callan, who was too inclusive to be contained in one character, was sometimes Falstaff and sometimes Cardinal Newman, according as his mood was convivial or elevated. The question under discussion or the talk itself was called a "stem"—the phrase "to chew a stem" was a favorite of Pat Callan's. Stuart's expressed views at such times were likely to be rather cynical, so that one of his roommates used to say to him: "If I were accused of the blackest crime in the calendar you would believe me guilty!" To which he would reply: "I have a sad lucidity!" The assured and authoritative tone of his pronouncements was satirized in some verses by the same friend:

> "Low on my couch the Jove-like form of Ben
> Rests in Olympian ease; beyond the ken
> Of mortals knows he whither, why, and whence,
> One only may enjoy omniscience.

"If Ben declares the world is upside down,
Lo! Every mortal walks upon his crown.
Ben's *ipse dixi* is sufficient proof
That fire is cold, snow hot, the floor the roof;
All powers and forces hold his word in awe,
Laws irk not him that is the source of Law."

Stuart records a number of such discussions in his diary—sometimes rather ruefully. "Discuss idealistic phil. with Pat till 1.30." "Bruce Brotherston down from Andover to spend the night, we 'stem' till 2 A. M." After hearing a lecture: "Home and read and talk till 2 A. M. Bad." Occasionally he reverted to an old pastime of writing verses with Woodbridge on a common theme. "Homer and I write verse—'I saw the sullen night flash eyes of ire!'"—"Stick and I each write a pome.—'The Red Banner.'" A pleasant variation of this game was a burlesque which he wrote on a bad sonnet of Woodbridge's, of which the idea was that a lover, even a happy lover, can never be sure that he knows the inmost self of his beloved. The sonnet was called "Incognita" and began thus:

"Not yet, O Love, is thine own self revealed,
For through the veil of flesh, thy beauteous guise,
Darkly, as through a glass, there lures mine eyes
The soul that in thy fairness lieth sealed."

Stuart's burlesque envisages the matter under the similitude of a coon hunt, in which the beloved's supposititious soul is represented by the real or imaginary coon.

"What time the huntsman and his hungry dog
Suspect in hollow tree an ancient coon,
The pup he barks, with fore paws on a log,
The puzzled huntsman damns the cloud-veiled moon.

"For high in hollow trunk from little hole
He thinks at times the sapient coon outpeers;
But when he would with gun his fate control,
Down pops the hoary face and disappears.

"So, Love, when I survey thy moonless eyes,
A mystic something seems to bob therein;
But as in wilderment I gaze,—it flies!—
As if it could not be and had not been.

"Now did we hunt in error of the moon,
O Life? O Hunter, *was* there any coon?"

With his friends Sherman went much to the theater, which offered far better entertainment in Boston then than now. They generally sat in the second balcony, which, as Lamb testifies, is the best place from which to see a play when you are young. In 1903–1904 he saw on the average two plays a week. Harry Smith was a devoted theater-goer, and the "Williams Three," as Dean Briggs called them, were all enthusiastically listening to Baker's lectures on drama. Baker had a theory, based on the development of Elizabethan tragedy, that great modern tragedy would probably arise from popular melodrama. They therefore visited the music halls to see such melodramas as *In the Shadow of the Gallows*, and tried vainly to discover in them the germ of high tragedy. The next year Sherman had less time to attend the theater, on account of his very heavy schedule; but his diary records that he went to thirty-one plays. In his last year he was still more constantly occupied with his thesis, and the diary (which, however, was very intermittently kept) records only ten.

In the course of three years he saw nearly all the famous actors of the day, including such elder luminaries as Bernhardt, Réjane, Clara Morris, and Henry Irving. He saw such excellent performances of Shakespeare as Ada Rehan's in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Edith Wynne Matthison's in *Twelfth Night*, and Forbes-Robertson's in *Hamlet*. The last, given in Sanders Theater in the Elizabethan fashion, impressed Sherman deeply. He saw a representative series of modern plays, from Ibsen to Shaw and Barrie. Arnold Daly's presentation of Shaw's early plays especially delighted him; and on seeing Robert Loraine in *Man and Superman* he wrote in his journal: "Most delicious 'intellectual farce.' Merriest evening ever spent in the theater."

For Nance O'Neil's acting in modern drama he felt something of the special enthusiasm of the discoverer. In the winter of

1903–1904 she was playing *Magda* and *The Fires of St. John* and *Hedda Gabler* superbly to an almost empty house—the old and unfashionable Columbia Theater, remote from the regular theatrical district. She had gained some reputation in Australia but was almost unknown in America. Sherman went to see every play in which she appeared and urged all his friends to go. In classical drama—*Macbeth*, for instance—she was disappointing, but in modern realistic plays she was profoundly impressive. Certain moments—the end of the third act of *The Fires of St. John*, the scene in which Hedda burns with passionate gloating the masterpiece of her enemy and her husband's rival—were almost unendurable in their reality and intensity.

In the fall of 1904 Ruth Mears came to Quincy to teach, and Stuart saw many of these plays with her. On Sundays he regularly went out to Quincy to see her, or met her in Boston to attend church or an oratorio and visit the Art Museum, walk or picnic afterward. Such entries in the diary as the following are characteristic:

"*Sun. Jan. 8, 1905.* A breakfast lunch at 12. 2.16 to Quincy. We take fine walk to the sea; grey-green with small waves—the gulls—the big broken masses of ice on the shore. R. reads Rostand's *The Fantastics*—Lehmans have much company. But we tea with the dark-eyed Della.—Home on 7.08 to Anglo-Saxon."

"*Sun. May 28, 1905.* Meet R. B. M. at Harvard Square and out to Concord and Lexington. . . . Battleground—School of Phil.—Sleepy Hollow—Sup in the Tavern at Concord—Back on trolleys."

There are several letters about this time to his sister Katherine which show him in the rôle of literary and moral counsellor, with allusions to his private reading and trains of reflection, and one to Homer Woodbridge giving an account of his manner of life during a summer in Cambridge.

(*To Katherine Sherman*)

May 25, 1905.

My dear Kitty:

Your charming document arrived some time ago, and I intended to answer at once as you suggested; but it unfortunately

found me engaged in my annual letter to Prof. Morton—and so I haven't got around till now—and I fear we shall after all not be nearly so "whoopin'" as we should desire. It becomes you well, doesn't it, to roast poor Mrs. dead Thomas Carlyle, for having tried to let her little light so shine—doesn't it—you paradoxical affected unruly creetur!!! Did I give you any occasion for it? Did I suggest any comparison? Was there any ground for jealousy?—Not a jot, not a jot. It's just all along o' you women. I've lost all patience with you. At the same time, I think one must confess that Jane Welsh's main ambition in life was to be clever—which one admits is not perhaps the noblest aim for that noblest of creatures—"L. W."—"To be good" —Let us suggest—if she had made that her aim, you would doubtless have loved her more,—or "pious"—or "common sensible,"—or "logical" or always "intelligent"—or "like other girls"—some or all of these things would beyond question have endeared her to you. You set such permanent and steadfast value upon the S. S. virtues. Now don't accuse me of veiling my opinions—If I don't "reveal my opinions" on any subject, then pray *whose* opinions do I reveal? And then "again" our Kitty needn't be so "uppish" as your mother would say, at a suggestion now and then about a book or so. You really don't have to wade thro' them if you find them dull. And still we mustn't confine ourself too strictly to the things that one likes—otherwise one won't be the lovely many-sided creature that one would like to be. For instance if one likes people—or a few people—one must take some pains to acquaint oneself with the things that those people like—for common civility's sake, or for the sake of making life agreeable. Living with Pat and Charley I must pick up a few points about the law, spur and goad my sluggish interest in cases on "property," "trusts," "equity," etc.—in order to requite their natural interest in the general field of literature. Then one must occasionally sacrifice oneself and go to a ball game—as I did yesterday for the first time this year—when one lives in the same suite with an ex-baseball captain. . . .

You will be pleased to hear that your literary doctrines are almost precisely those of M. Jules Lemaître—one of the leaders of the "impressionistic" school in France. There is something in what he says—(there is almost always something in every-

thing that anybody says) tho' we can't at all unreservedly subscribe to his creed.

"*Aimons les livres qui nous plaisent sans nous soucier des classifications et des doctrines et en convenant avec nous-mêmes que notre impression d'aujourd' hui n'engagera point celle de demain.*"

. . .

I enjoyed the selections from the "blessed Tourgénieff"—I've read one of his novels (some years ago) *Smoke* I think it was.

I judge he finds favor in your sight. (1) Why do you like him? (2) Do you know?

No, I haven't seen the article on W. Davidson, but last fall I heard one of the finest lectures ever delivered—on him—by William James, that romantic psychologist, that breezy stylist, live man. Wm. James knew D. well of course, had numerous anecdotes personal of him—how he and D. had a bottle of old Burgundy up in the Adirondacks one night—and as they walked home D. "called so loud that all the hollow deep" of the valley resounded—How they were—well this is very likely all in the article you read so I won't continue.

Last Monday I heard another lecture, on Balzac, by Wm. J's brother Henry James, insufferable novelist, insane stylist, corpse. We were quite angry with him. But before I leave Davidson let me warn you against an excess of individualism. It's odd that those who are in least need of outside encouragement to their individualistic tendencies are always pouncing upon someone to lend them "moral support." The individualists can't have the "last word." This is a theme on which I have fought with the Old Stick till my "eyelids would no longer wag." But we can't discuss it just here.—Sunday P. M. (that you may have that detail about myself which you say you miss) I went down to Nantasket Beach. It was very pretty. Tho' somewhat chilly.

I hope you are going to have a somewhat pleasant vacation, and will tell me all about it that you can spare time and inclination to.

Yours, S.

(*To The Same*)

[Cambridge] Aug. 21, 1905.

My dearest Kitty:

I'd hoped to get a letter off to you before this. My choice friends I always save for the last in hopes of finding a better hour than usual with livelier mind. The result is they usually receive a note on the spur of some particular moment. . . . And I wish a great big wish that I amounted to something by this time, so that we might have a fine attractive place where you young people could flourish and cultivate all the choice rare flowers of life. Such a wish is very fruitful doubtless. But you who, as I remarked before, are so fond of subsisting on rose leaves and pale tea, may perhaps find some wan nourishment in a thing so idle as this. . . . Then I should like to have seen you some more before you go away, hoping to insinuate some new ideas (that have been crystallizing in my mind) into your view. I have been very considerably disturbed in my thoughts by the readiness with which you assimilate the point of view of these wretched modern writers in whom is no sweetness, nor strength, nor peace. (I have studied the same effect in Ben W. —also in myself.) We young people, not much experienced, have a sort of chameleon aptitude for taking on all the colors and shades of the last striking book we read. And when the last books we read are "enlightened" European productions of the latest "intellectual" movement, the results are more or less deplorable. I think by the grace of God I have worked a great part of them out of my system, and have returned in my taste to something far less scintillating, far less racy and pungent, but much more sound and productive of health and sweetness in the soul, those things namely, which should be the especial possessions of all those whose calling is to bring others back to health.—I cannot enter into any discussion here for it is a very big subject. But I beg you by the name of "sweet reasonableness," not to consider that you have drained wisdom's cup to the dregs yet. For I have been told by wise men in whom I have much greater confidence than in myself, and I have also just begun to prove it by experience, that the true cup of wisdom has in it many drops of honey, and that even when the

taste is bitter the draught is wholesome and makes for strength. These remarks may all be blindly aimed; for I confess I do not know you. Still I may somewhat have divined you. And I cannot have my Kitty turning into the barren and frosty ways of this simple, convenient, but most condemnable cynical philosophy. I am sure that I make out the case much worse than it is. You were ever a mannerist. You love your precious little intellectual affectations better than life. Don't you? Most of us do. But if there is anything in what I've said, try a new lot!

When one lives a while almost or quite by one's self one's notions of the sources of the satisfactory life are likely to clarify somewhat. Haven't you found it so? One has simply got to make a serene place in the heart or go without it forever. Those who have made such a place "are aware of some part of their future, because they have already become part of this future. They have faith in themselves, for they know in advance how events will be received in their soul."

As you will observe, solitude has turned me into a very tiresome preacher. But as I was bent on writing to you I had to tell you what was in my "so-called mind." No events take place here in my part of the world. One reads one's books and in one's leisure one meditates on things human and divine—the latter by preference. You were a fine girl to find my old Ford[13] for me —many thanks indeed. I apologized at your suggestion to the good mother, and I think she has forgiven me as usual.

I hope some day not too far off we may get acquainted and talk over these matters. There's nothing I should like so much. I envy for myself your undertaking. Not because I think it will be without its hard sides, but I covet greatly the time when I shall be at last trying to see whether I can do anything serious or not—using the material that I am for all it is worth. That's something.—If you think fit, you can at any time drop me a line, even the briefest, and next time I write we'll try to be

[13]Stuart had gone to Cambridge early in August to work on the subject of his doctoral dissertation, John Ford. Through an oversight he had left his copy of Ford's plays, containing many of his notes and memoranda, somewhere at home, and had written in great anxiety to his mother, listing some ten places where he might have left the book, and urgently requesting her to look for it. The response had been immediate and satisfactory, and he had hastened to send her a repentant note.

pleasant and common-sensible and less obscure, and more comprehensible. It is very late and the night has gone to my head. But even when I write again in a "choicer" hour, you will not be so extravagant as to demand that I should be then more than I am now,

Affectionately yours,
S.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

[Cambridge] August 27, 1905.

DEAR OLD-DRY-TIMBER-JUST-BEGINNING-AFRESH-LIKE-AARON'S-ROD-TO-BURST-AGAIN-INTO-BLOSSOM-(FRUIT, TOO?),
HAIL!:

One regrets, or *would* regret exceedingly to have waited a second call before replying to so excellent a letter as you favored us with, had not the delay evoked from your god-gifted pen a postal-card-message which I regard, to employ the choice locution of one greater than I, (in fact an acknowledged disciple of the Master-of-us-All—I refer in short to the never-sufficiently-to-be-avoided-and-execrated-Henry James)—which I regard, I reiterate, a postal which I regard as having achieved, (as far as humanly achievement is possible) in the particular line or category of literary activity into which it falls, taking as you must my opinion at your own valuation, since effectively and modestly I cannot stamp my own—"supreme felicity."—Catch the ghost of the idea through the Jacobean syntaxis?

But to hasten on to our Semitic affairs.—My throte is not yet cut unto my nekke-bone. In fact for the first time this summer I went to church this A. M. (the old Cambridge Baptist), and sang "O Alma" with the little flock, and heard an excellent sermon. I have, furthermore, little or nothing to knock on here. I am virtual monarch of the 2nd story. Have a whole suite of rooms. My uprisings and downsittings are under the governance of no man,—no, nor woman neither. My books are strewed luxuriously through three rooms and over as many desks.—Last night Mrs. B. sent up two buns of which I made my breakfast. This noon she offered chicken soup. The children never enter except to bring my cream or mail. Their squalling is less or I am more hardened. . . .

As for Pat I've exchanged civilities with him now and then, and get from him a very different impression of his daily walks and thoughts than that which you strive to convey. I gather that the Holy Man spends his leisure meditating, cutting and culling "stems" of things human and divine to be used through the winter in our spiritual discourses. From you I should suspect that he were mostly occupied with the tangles of Neæra's hair. I believe he also requests me to consign you to the devil for not writing to him.—Which seems to me a very high-handed performance—and somewhat inexplicable since I have given him, I think, a master-key, or nut-shell clue, to whatever conduct you may at any time in the summer indulge in. . . . But the conduct of this Irish Janus might give you pause, my boy. Note how he turneth to me the holy cheek, to thee, the wanton jowl! He has assimilated the Pauline doctrine, "all things to all men." (I quote lest you being ever a little feeble on Biblical texts might not get the allusion.[14])—But as for your conduct and influence on the Holy Man: O reform it altogether. . . .

I enclose you following choice lines on the weed, culled from the words of a quack in Daniell's "Queen's Arcadia,"

"A certain hearbe wrapt up in rowles
From the Island of Nicosia, where it growes;
Infus'd I thinke in some pestiferous juice.

. . . . . .

"And this in powder made, and fir'd, he suckes
Out of a little hollow instrument
Of calcinated clay, the smoake thereof:
Which either he conveyes out of his nose,
Or down into his stomacke with a whiffe.

. . . . . .

"For whereas heretofore they wonted were
At all their meetings and their festivals,
To pass the time in telling witty tales,
In questions, riddles, and in purposes,
Now doe they nothing else but sit and sucke,
And spit and slaver all the time they sit."

[14]One of Stuart's favorite methods of insulting his friends was to assume their ignorance of the Bible.

Pretty realistic bit of work, isn't it? It reminds me of a Biblical passage (you may recall it—in the Old Test.) "the breath of his nostrils is terrible."

When you've spent the summer's last golden coin, I hope you'll be sorry you weren't down here getting initiated into Arcadia, and Euphuism, and Daniel, and B. Barnes, and Bacon, and all those duffers, as B. Wendell might say.

> 'In youth when I did love, did love,
> Methought there was nothing so meet,
> To contract o' the time for a' my behove—"

(Bah, the lines are wrong.)—But I don't believe I was ever so wilfully, deliberately, cold-blooded-and-premeditatedly indolent as thou, Vice-president of the Joy Club. . . .

There is little to mention of our deeds at this place. We are practically a fixed star. We have a little orbit whose diameter is measured by the distance from 51 Ox. to Har. Sq. . . . We live our larger life in the spacious times of great Elizabeth. Thither we will welcome you at all hours of the day or night in mail or in person.—Commend us to the passing consideration of the Impetuous Benjamin and the fair Elizabeth. . . . As for yourself, since you cannot have our present counsel, try to think what we *should* counsel if we were present.

Yours,
S. P. S.

A few miscellaneous entries in the diary touch on other aspects of these years:

"*Nov. 14.* Swear off smoking till Thanksgiving with C. M. T."

"Warned away from bargain shoes by enormous red-headed laborer who tells me that those are the 'γ—δ—st shoes a man ever put on his feet.'"

"C. M. T. induced us to play 'Hearts.' How silly, yet how soothing!"

"P. M. went with Pat and Homer to see the Boston Nat. and N. Y. Nat. baseball (8–2). First (and last) professional game of my life."

"P. M. write music (!) (?) for song of Dowson's 'Why am I Sorry, Chloe.'"

The cadences of this little piece of Dowson's fascinated Stuart, and the air which he composed for it has a haunting quality.

"Why am I sorry, Chloe? Because the moon is far,
And who am I to be straitened in a little earthly star?
. . . . . .
Because thy lips are red, and thy breasts upbraid the snow?
(There is neither white nor red in the pleasance where I go.)"

On April 1, 1906, he records finishing and handing in to Professor Kittredge his doctoral dissertation.

"Return (from breakfast) to finish thesis. Much company and internal rage. Fuming inside and out!

"Work from 3.30 to 11.10 P. M. straight—then carry her down to 8 Hilliard St. K: 'I guess I was dozing.' She weighs a bouncing 8 pounds."

He celebrated this consummation with a little party at the Heidelberger Rathskeller and by going to see Ethel and John Barrymore in *Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire*, "an interesting piece of sentiment or -ality if you like better."

It was a profound relief to Sherman to get this task behind him. He had written a course thesis on Ford's plays for English 14 in 1904, and Ford—a writer not in general very attractive to him—had been much in his thoughts since that time. The actual writing of the thesis had taken about five months. He wrote to Dean Briggs: "I was much tempted to inscribe upon the title page some lines I am fond of about the 'exercise of the spider,' who 'for the weaving of a scornful web eviscerateth itself many days.'" In spite of his intense weariness of the subject, however, his dissertation was an exceptionally strong one and received high praise. Professor Baker wrote of it to Professor Clark of Illinois, who still had his eye on Sherman: "I regard

the thesis, which was prepared with me, as nearer my ideal in its combination of real contributiveness and literary presentation than any thesis I have had for many a long day." Perhaps the finest compliment came from a man who had known Sherman only slightly and who was very chary in his praise of learned monographs, Barrett Wendell, who said to Dean Briggs, "That is the first doctor's thesis I ever saw that is literature."[15]

From April to June, 1906, Sherman was chiefly occupied in getting ready for his oral examination for the Ph. D. This was a severe ordeal; the examination lasted three hours and took place in the presence of as many of the older members of the Division of Modern Languages as cared to attend. Sherman wrote to Dean Briggs: "I am sorry you are not going to be present at the examination; I had intended to be especially well prepared on Donne [a favorite poet of the dean's]. Now it looks as if I should have to be introduced to most of the examiners, and I am in doubt whether anyone will be there willing to ask me anything I know. Of course I suppose that is not the object of the ordeal, and I shall go up expecting to be riddled and shredded by the enemy." The examination took place on June 12th, and he reported his success to his mother on a postcard, thus: "Ph. D. O. K. S. P. S."

While he was preparing for the examination the news came of his grandfather Pratt's death in Dorset. On a similar occasion a few months later he wrote to friends: "The mystery of death I do not know how to speak of. If it were my own loss, I should hardly know how to feel and I cannot tell how to speak to another."[16] But when he wrote to his mother he found the right words.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

Cambridge, April 10, 1906.

DEAR MOTHER:

. . . Your letter came today telling of Grandfather's end. It is not sad, is it? when these good old men depart crowned

[15]Letter from Dean Briggs to Homer Woodbridge. In a letter to Sherman Dean Briggs attributes a similar expression of praise to Professor Kittredge.

[16]Letter to Homer and Isabelle Woodbridge, January 1, 1907.

with the virtues of many years. Dean Shaler, one of the best loved and best known men at Harvard, passed away this afternoon. It seemed a few years too soon for him. He was only 65, though he fought all through the Civil War. His step was elastic as a boy's, and he was one of the most genial men in the world. Dean Briggs introduced me to him only a month ago, when he was in the best of health.—Just how old was Grandfather? I should have liked very much to be at his funeral, but I don't see how I can. (The grind keeps up harder and faster than ever. But there'll come a time some day.) I'm looking forward very much to the end of June, and a chance to see you again; you remember we planned a little vacation trip to be taken by you and me. You mustn't forget that. Good-night, much love.

From
STUART.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POET AS TEACHER

AS THE period of study at Harvard drew toward a close the question of a job for the following year became important. Just before the February examinations in 1906 Sherman received a letter from Dean Briggs asking him to consider the possibility of staying at Harvard as an instructor and teaching freshman rhetoric, in case no more attractive position should be available elsewhere. His reply indicates his strong inclination to accept the opportunity and his reasons for wishing to postpone a definite answer.

(*To Dean Briggs*)

51 Oxford St.,
January 24, 1906.

MY DEAR DEAN BRIGGS:

Nothing could please me so much as a chance to teach at Harvard. The alluring prospect of another year here has disturbed me all day, and I have been studying what to say in reply to your provisional offer. Since you allow some days to think it over, I postpone decision.

May I tell you why?—not as to the head of the Department of English, but as to that good counselor to whom men bring their difficulties big and little. I would not willingly add one thought to the load, and I do not mean at all to ask you to assume the burden of my decision. But, since you are so good as to make me the offer which pleases me so much, I should like you to know the grounds of my hesitation, which are personal.

If I had only myself to consider, I should accept at once. Here is the teacher's Mecca; here is everything that I have found best in life; here is the chance to become whatever one is good for. And any salary is large enough which enables one to live here.—Forgive the obtrusion of private affairs; I have

practically given hostages to fortune. After one has been engaged some five years, one has others to consider. In the course of a year or so, we contemplate flying in the face of prudence, of common reason, and trusting our lots to the Raven-Feeder.

Now these are the considerations. $1000 may be quite as good as I shall get anywhere. But at the end of the year would the prospects be better here or somewhere else? If I should get a chance considerably better than $1000 at another place for the first year, or if the prospect at the end of the year were much better, I suppose I ought to consider that. At the same time I imagine that spending a year here as instructor would much improve my opportunities for next year. I hate exceedingly to make my decision hinge upon such considerations, but I think you will understand the situation.—I recognize, too, that this is much ado about a single year. My inclinations are all for accepting the offer should it be made, and I hope it may seem the best thing to do. I will look you up after the Mid-years. —Very many thanks for your kindness.

Yours very truly,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

The matter was still unsettled in April, when Sherman was recommended for an instructorship in English literature at Northwestern University. The salary was the same as that proposed at Harvard. He wrote to Dean Briggs, inquiring whether anything more definite could be said about the Harvard position, and asking whether the Dean would advise him to apply for the instructorship at Northwestern. From some points of view, he says, the work at Northwestern seems attractive, and Professor Baker has advised his applying. "On the other hand," he continues, "I do not much long to be settled in the West. There are several members of my family in this part of the world whom I should keep an eye on, and be partly responsible for,—and traveling back and forth is not profitable. Prof. Baker has proposed that I should edit Ford for his series of the dramatists . . . and this could be done here better than elsewhere. Finally I secretly cherish a desire 'not to get tags, but to know more,' as Prof. Wendell would say, about certain fields of knowledge especially well treated at Harvard.

"However, this Northwestern Univ. position is the only other

thing that has turned up yet, and if it is 'manifest destiny,' I am quite willing to meet it half way. But before deciding, I should be very glad indeed to have your opinion on it, which I am ready to accept as final."

The Dean's advice favored Northwestern, because of the opportunity to teach literature there, the better prospect of advancement, and the uncertainty of the position at Harvard. "What you say about accepting my decision as final," he wrote, "alarms me, because it indicates that you think I know more than I do." His advice, however, settled the question, so far as Sherman was concerned. On the other side of the bargain there was some hesitation. The Northwestern people were considering another man at Harvard, to whom they finally gave the preference. Meantime Dean Clark of Illinois, who had offered an instructorship to Sherman at the end of his college course, made a new proposal; but at this time Stuart evidently preferred either Cambridge or Evanston to Urbana. The man who had been appointed at Northwestern now withdrew, and Sherman renewed his application there. Early in June he was appointed almost simultaneously to instructorships at Northwestern and Harvard, and in accordance with Dean Briggs's advice, he accepted the position at Evanston. The reluctance with which he made the decision, and some of the reasons for his regrets, appear in a letter to Dean Briggs, whose courses in versification and in Browning he had been especially anxious to take.

(*To Dean Briggs*)

51 Oxford St., Cambridge,
May 29, 1906.

Dear Dean Briggs:

The appointment at Northwestern has not yet been made, but the Dean has written that he will nominate me at the next meeting of the trustees, so I suppose the matter is nearly settled. I hate the worst way to leave the pleasant associations here and to set out for the unknown. On the other hand it seems to be a very good opening (Professor Kittredge thinks a remarkably good one considering my youth and inexperience)—and I am looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to the

work. If I give the four courses at present designed for me, I shall certainly learn much, however the rest fare. And *School, College and Character* says one can accomplish something by sheer work; I think I can furnish that.

It is probably a good thing for me that I am going away; if I were here I should want to go to school again. It seems as if all the good courses were just beginning. I have been reading grammars and "scrutinizing the backs of books" for three years, and now feel all ready to begin studying literature. The first year I was here I remember putting on my list of studies Versification, and I remember too how mercilessly it was deleted. After that year it became a hope, and now that the stifled bard has spent his golden hours on Gothic, it seems likely to become an everlasting regret.—Too much subservience to the "stern daughter of the voice of God," too little courage "to snatch a fearful joy"—pretty terms to express a paltering expediency. I did want to join the happy bards! And now comes this new course in Browning to brim the cup of Tantalus. Why can't the syntax of Browning be required instead of the syntax of Ulfilas? For me remains in the advantages of Freshmen yet unhazed the bleak comfort of parents in the opportunities of their children.[1] . . .

It will be a pleasant privilege to let you know my plans as soon as they shape themselves. Please pardon the length of this idle talk and believe me,

Very truly yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

The love of Harvard expressed in these letters to Dean Briggs remained with Sherman all his life. Much as he owed to Williams, he felt that his debt to Harvard was far greater. It was to Harvard that he sent his son. Probably no honor which came to him gratified him so deeply as the invitation to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard in 1918. The severity of his comments on what he regarded as dangerous tendencies in the graduate school is really an outgrowth of his intense loyalty. The frankness of his criticism, of course, belongs to the true Harvard tradition; for loyalty to Harvard implies loyalty to truth, which is the motto on her shield.

[1]The omitted passage about the impending Ph. D. examination has already been quoted on p. 133.

His mood at the beginning of the summer, as he looked forward to a penniless and busy vacation, is characteristically reflected in a letter to his mother.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

[Cambridge]
June 11, 1906.

DEAR MOTHER:

How would you like to hear a little tale of woe from me? I haven't been thinking very much about this summer hitherto, because I've had the exam. on my mind (comes off to-morrow). But as the end of the year draws on, the future's shadow deepens on the present hour.—Prof. Kittredge, who suggested to me that nice fat little piece of work about two weeks ago, has gone abroad without saying a word, and I find myself at the beginning of the summer worse broke and more at sea than ever before. Then, somehow, you and Homer feel inspired to play a sort of sardonic joke on me—namely Homer comes around and begs me to let him lend (or give) me money to go abroad with him. And you offer to set up $200 to get married on! And I look at my empty pocket-book, and groan and laugh at you both and at the comic situation, and wonder where I'm going to raise the money to pay my bills and get out of town. What I've got to do this summer is neither to go abroad, nor get married; but to work like sin most of the time preparing lectures for three courses that I'm going to give next year. In order to do this I've got either to be near a large library, or to buy a considerable number of books—I've got to get some anyway.—I don't know how seriously you proposed the marrying notion; but I feel pretty sure I shall never need the money as much as I do this summer. I don't want to be given the stuff at any time—I think you ought to have it yourself. And at the present time I suppose you'll have some pretty solid expenses moving. But it is sufficiently clear that I've got to have some money, to carry me over to October when I receive my first installment of salary. If you are in a position to lend me some out of said $200, that would be very sweet. If you aren't can you suggest any way that I can borrow?

(2) What in time am I going to do with my stuff down here.

Ship it to Williamstown, Dorset, Evanston, or Coventry? I'll be switched if I know. ("I ponder these thoughts and they comfort me.") I'm not sure whether you've invited me to Dorset, or for how long.—There doesn't seem to be much place in the world in the summer time for these unattached scholars. Don't trouble your thoughts too much over the matter; but if you have any suggestions I should be very glad to hear them. I'll write you a note to-morrow after the exam.—when I shall be less nervous—things being settled then for better, or for worse.

Affectionately,
S. P. S.

Dr. Pratt had left his house in Dorset to Mrs. Sherman and his library to Stuart. Early in the summer the family moved to Dorset, and Stuart was occupied for some days in packing goods at Williamstown and in unpacking and getting settled in Dorset. He spent the summer there, except for a very short visit in Nottingham, a trip to Pittsfield to act as best man at a friend's wedding, and a week or so of study in Cambridge. He was considerably worried about his classes at Northwestern and was working hard to prepare for them. He could not spare time even for camping on Greylock, though he and Ruth paid a flying visit to the mountain. In July he wrote to Woodbridge: "My courses scare me breathless. I don't know what in thunder to do with the accursed Spenser course. I should immensely like your collaboration. I wish I knew how anybody teaches that." He read Spenser through in the course of the summer, but on the eve of the opening of the university still confessed, "I fear that course like the devil."

A letter from Evanston gives his first impression of the place.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

2034 Orrington Ave.,
Evanston, Ill.,
Sept. 24, 1906.

Ave Benedicte!—For your card and long gorgeous letter much thanks. The latter came in the nick of time to connect one cheerful day with the next, and bridge the Abyss.—One might

think to read that—that Richard is himself again. Your acct. of the Mts. dazzles me; but you should walk with me as to-night, under the moon and stars, on the hard wet sand, listening to the many-voiced Michigan, and watching her subtly smiling in the dark—with unnumberable laughters,—the long seductive caress of her foaming waves amorous of the shore—the brooding skies,—the mists blue and gray that hang over her deep changeful reticent bosom—in the sunshine her mild mature melancholy—now riant, now sombre—her stormy passionate days—when dark secrets come to light—only day before yesterday she tossed up here near by the body of a woman, not ten hours drowned.—I walked to-night with a cool low East wind in my hair, in fine ecstasy—noetic state—vital synthesis—patches, tatters, of existence uniting on "Great Loom of Time" —into ineffable patterns, etc. etc.,—ready for poetry. . . . Porphyry says that his master Plotinus had in the course of the six years he was with him four of these ecstasies. If my stoodents don't conquer me I hope to be intoxicated mildly diurnally by these godlike waters.

. . . I'm just back from my first faculty meeting. Our faculty has no Mortons, nor Lefavours—if my impressions are correct. There are a considerable number of young men. Our dept.—Eng. Lit.—is of course quite young; Prof. B[rown] c.35—Asst. Prof. Goddard c.30—Dr. S[herman] c.25. So far we are all hand in glove. . . . Goddard is a Worcester man, and this summer just married a delightful Worcester girl (Holyoke '02)—She makes excellent fruit salad, and assures me that the only thing in life she really cares for is Poetry—not a blue-stocking in the least, but your ideal vivacious, sensitive, and cordial bride. Now Goddard himself and I find that our points of sympathy are very numerous, running all the way from a dislike of Ruskin to a dislike of "biled shirts." . . . He is very fond of speculation and theorizing, he assures me, whether he has any facts to go on or not—which is promising,—a good looking fellow with good philosophical brow, and steady blue eyes—the phlegmatic temper—a good sense of humor, and a very successful teacher.

. . . I've been reading like sin in J. S. Mill—diff. sort than I thought—mighty interesting all the way through—sort of an Englishized, chastened, disciplined Rousseau in his political

ideas. Tremendous passion for social improvements held firmly in logical harness. I've been through almost everything of his except the Polit. Econ. and the Logic. . . .

Yours,
S. P. S.

The friendship with Harold Goddard and his wife, of which the beginning is chronicled in this letter, developed rapidly and was destined to be lasting. Closely associated as they were in their work, the two young men found that they agreed on many topics and disagreed on enough to provide material for endless discussion. Sherman saw the Goddards very frequently that year and corresponded with them after he went to Illinois. Professor Goddard's recollections of him in the Northwestern period are therefore of peculiar interest. He writes:

"As I look back, I realize clearly what I was perhaps only unconsciously aware of at the time: that there were two Stuart Shermans, Sherman the poet, and Sherman the scholar and incipient critic. In spite of the fact that he was loaded with work, as any ambitious young teacher at the outset of his career is bound to be, it was the poet at that time, I should say, that was in the ascendant. In his free moments, Stuart Sherman was one of the most romantically minded persons I have ever known. One of my earliest memories of him is that of pacing the shore of Lake Michigan (the same Lake in which he went down twenty years later) while he read, or chanted, to me the lines of a sonnet, 'De Senectute,' he had just written—he was in his middle twenties. On another occasion I came out of the bright daylight into his room on Orrington Avenue with the sense that I had suddenly stepped into a cavern. All the shades were drawn down and he sat by a dim green light composing poetry. In the course of the year he showed me many of his poems and I dare say he wrote many others that I did not see. But I should give a wrong impression if I pictured just a dreamy youth mooning over sonnets in a darkened room. He was beginning his teaching and he dedicated tremendous energy to it. He read with what was to me appalling exhaustiveness. He was giving, among others, a course in Nineteenth Century Literature, and while his class was reading one volume of George Eliot's, for example, he would do his best to review or read for

the first time every one of her novels. 'I have the ambition,' he once confided to me, in his entirely modest manner, when I made some remark on the extent of his researches, 'to be the most widely read young man in America,' or something to that effect. From the beginning, he wished, as far as possible, to be acquainted with an author's work in its entirety before venturing to estimate him critically. He was a scholar, in the rare fine sense of that much-soiled word. On the other hand few things kindled his wrath more quickly than 'scholarship' on the German-American model. . . .

"Though the two sides of him were in no sense separate, on the whole he was the scholar during his working hours, the poet in his moments of relaxation and friendly intercourse. But I remember one occasion, or rather heard it so vividly described that I have ever since then felt that I was present, when the poet unexpectedly burst forth and overflowed the scholar and teacher in the classroom. His students were reading *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*. He was taking up with them the scene where Richard first meets Lucy, and his class, of both young men and women, did not 'rise' properly, in his opinion, to the beauty of the passage. Disgusted at their irresponsiveness, he stopped, frowned, and lifting his copy of the book hurled it across the room, thereby symbolically washing his hands of an unromantic younger generation. His patience with prosaic people always had its limits."

It is the poet as teacher who appears in the following letter.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

[Evanston] Oct. 3, '06.

Mon cher Michel—by the way, isn't your skepticism slipping from you as a garment that is old, and a vesture that is folded away? Have you, or have you not, noticed how this active life plays the deuce with your theories? How it unbalances you in your carefully posed "attitude toward life"?—I'm beginning to find that I have no more "general conceptions of things." Everything seems to fuse together into a certain passion to glow and make glow. All day and half the night I hear the "angel crying from the sun." You remember my declared ambition to

you at our conference in the spruces. I can't say that I've noted any signs of the divine intoxication as yet among my children, but I flatter myself now and then that one or two of them are biting a bit into the glass.—I fire Chesterton's paradoxes at them now and again—: which makes 'em prick up their ears. 'Tother day I got mad at my 19th cent. prose class, and told them literature is not tiddledywinks, and they'd got to have souls above tatting—which they proceeded carefully to copy into their notebooks!

. . . To my surprise I'm getting the best results from my 16th cent. poetry—we've spent two weeks on Wyatt and Surrey, apparently with considerable interest and profit. . . .

I've just been down to the Goddard's flat—I like to see these young housekeepers. I should vastly like to drop in on your establishment. . . . But the G's are a pretty fine pair, too, and I like them both vastly. Both merry and thoughtful. . . .

Had a mad postal from Ben shrieking in 5 languages that he has been smitten by the god! Also a first rate letter from Pat, lamenting the loss of his old stemming fraternity and *especially* of my spiritual guidance—or rather "domineering," I believe, is the word he chooses. He feels a little at sea down there. "Charlie hasn't yet become sufficiently cognizant of the fact that one can never be right." . . .

Your assault on my Lake and on me is quite unjust. Sometimes she is as I suggest—sometimes she is like a poem of Paul Verlaine's—sometimes she comes charging the banks like a herd of mad white bulls. Custom cannot stale her infinite variety.

Have you ever read Sir W. Raleigh's 21st and last book of "Cynthia"? Sir, it contains some of the divinest elegiac poetry mortal mind ever framed! 'Twas writ when the spirit of the man was broken and he lay in mortal prison, and spoke the bitterness of his heart of the loved and lost Eliza.

Consider these lines and the stanzas following,

"Seek not the sun in clouds when it is set.
On highest mountains, where those cedars grew
Against whose banks the troubled ocean beat,

"And were the marks to find thy hopèd port,
Into a soil far off themselves remove.

On Sestus' shore, Leander's late resort,
Hero hath left no lamp to guide her love.

(By the—*par splendeur de Dieu*—those are lines, tho, man!)

"Thou lookest for light in vain, and storms arise;
She sleeps thy death, that erst thy danger sigh'd;
Strive then no more; bow down thy weary eyes—
Eyes which to all these woes thy heart have guided.
She is gone, she is lost, she is found, she is ever fair.
Sorrow draws weakly, where love draws not too."

Show me a nobler line in all Elizabethan poetry! I would have cheerly lost my head to write that. Also see the exquisite stanzas about fled love:

"—Whom he hath left, he never grace affords,
But bathes his wings in their lamenting tears."

—Well, what with my quotations from Pat and Walter I have made you out a fair "Mermaid" epistle. Retort in their name if not for my sake and tell me what you think of the god-like Raleigh. . . .

Yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

In spite of his keen interest in his work and his pleasure in new friends, Sherman agreed with Pat Callan in missing sharply the congenial group that had been together in Cambridge. The next letter gives a glimpse of moments of depression.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

2034 Orrington Ave., Evanston, Ill.

Well, why a Goddes name don't *you* write? Don't you recognize the fact, sir, that I am in a strange land? Figure me walking gloomed and moody by the grey splashing tumult of the Michigan, clothed-on in a seedy raincoat, over-domed by a cheap umbrella, stalking through rain and slush, chin sunk in bosom, thinking on my labors, my debts, my sins that I have

done and shall do under the sun; and for lack of an Ear or a neighbor Voice, ejaculating to the Winds of Heaven and expressing all shades of emotion in the ablaut-rows (Dehnung) God! Gott! Gawd! Gæud!

Nor shall I like the smitten Benjamin pour forth my soul in what I have characterized as[2] "Philoctetean ululations." At the same time may the devil singe your eye-winkers if you don't soon pipe up.—All goes decently enough; I have a class of 20 in my 19th cent. prose to whom I preach the gospel twice a week. This affords me very considerable relief and some pleasure. But though I apply to the case all my powers, few of them can digest more than the sincere pap of the word—the meat is beyond their teething powers.—Five to six evenings, in the dusk, too spent for labor,—surfeited with the d—mned books (I'm writing you may guess at that hour) I spend a blue devil's-hour,—in which I could talk with —— were he sent. (Need I say more?)

. . . God, I'd like to hear *Teufelsdröckh* laugh some night.—These Methodists don't know how to laugh, neither do these Episcopalians.—Bah—I intended to write you only the baconickist note!

Pipe up
Yours,
S. P. S.

Good-evening, Belle! If you have idle moments, I think you would be amused to look into Froude's Life of Carlyle. It amused Miss Mears at least—especially that part dealing with the preliminary arrangements for the marriage, etc.—the letters of that period are very rich. "They consoled each other as if for execution."—Please prompt that selfish refrigerating husband of yours—to pipe up. I knew he would go that way.

"Best love,"
S.

The reply to this letter included an urgent invitation to spend the Christmas holidays in Colorado. Stuart's answer was intensely characteristic.

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[2]"What I have characterized as"—a Babbittian phrase.—H. E. W.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

[Evanston, Nov. 29, 1906.]

MIKE OF THE MOUNTAINS—SIR:—My "ablaut rows" elicited the desired response, so what matter if you didn't understand the music of 'em. However, be it known—they were no Promethean groans—minime!—they had a various meaning—e.g., o = (perhaps) "the sweetness of the earth is at my heart like a sword!"—aw = (perhaps) "how golden yet is vanity beneath the sun!" äää = (perhaps) "break, gods, into high reverberant laughter!" etc. etc. etc. Lord, I feel no solitude here. This bridge between the dark infinities is stormfully crowded with many forms and voices, and shadows from either abyss.—Yet the mere human at the viscera of me yearns, yearns, Sir, at the thought of that young Pig . . . would we sat about him, or some well-brought-up, well-nurtured young turkey, to-day in some Rathskeller cool and deep—And would a good many other things.—Xmas, for example—For the invitation and kind wishes *à la* the Grand Cyrus I thank you both. I thank you profoundly. To the heart's root I thank you.

. . . But, sir, my purpose holds to Xmas at 2034 Or. Evans. Ill. —where I expect to read great vols. and labor great hours, and spare provender and pence. For I busy myself about my deep desire to know the "glory of the world"—to raise out of the oblivious dust and old forgetfulness the ruddy hearts of the great dead. This day I had purposed to dine with the godlike Philip, with honest iron old religious Cromwell, to hear my friend Spenser discourse silver moonshine, to confer with Wm. Shakespeare about love, and about the enditing of sonnets, and to ask him what he thinks, when all's said and done, of that well-intentioned ass Mr. Sidney Lee—also to drink tobacco with W. Raleigh, and beg him to compare my own blend with that rank weed of Guiana that he was wont to swear by God's wounds was the divine weed.

I grow quite daft of late over the sonnet. We've read two or three hundred of 'em in our 16th cent. course, and are just going to take up Shakespeare's. Last Sunday I read from noon till eve (lunch excepted) 250 at a stretch, all of Spenser's and all of Shakespeare's—carefully, prayerfully.—It opened up

prospects worth seeing, sir. . . . By six P. M. I was in a fine frenzy and went down by the shores of the night-shrouded Michigan, rolling up his cold waves, and there strode to and fro along the sands three hours, which passed in the twinkling of an eye.—Some of the finest hours I've ever known, sir.—Seeing, sir, some of the shadows from either abyss. 'Tis a sad anti-climax to send you the enclosed sonnet. 'Twas composed thus entire in the head and later set down. 'Tis but the ashes of burnt-out fire, and no record of that fine conflagration.—Yet the thing I send, for the poet has, I think, found some favor with his "f's" and if you will read his first quatrain in a loud raucous voice you will note, I think, a very tolerable onomatopœia—But let that pass. As to *your Poem*, why the devil's name do you send such things through the impassable Pat? Of course he hasn't sent it.—Send it to me! Next time you send a poem send it through the Egyptian pyramids, by the way of the Chinese wall, under the Andes, through the rock of Gibraltar, but don't try to send it through Pat. Hurry it on, sir, Heaven invites, death waits,[3] etc. etc. Cordialest regards and greetings to the Household of Faith.

Yours,
S. P. S.

Many of the letters of this period enclosed recently written poems. The sonnet alluded to in this one is "De Senectute," which Harold Goddard remembers hearing Sherman chant. Though it is sentimental, and not at all in accordance with the present taste for the "extra dry" vintages of poetry, it shows considerable technical mastery.

"At twilight by a gray and wintry sea
I walk with feet that shun the foam no more,
Nor fearing heed the minatory roar
That comes loud-rolling from the deep to me;

"For all my lands with dismal frost are hoar
And fallen are the fronds of every tree,—
Though they shall bud again, I shall not see,
Nor care though they be blasted to the core.

[3]A reminiscence of one of Professor Kittredge's words of encouragement to a hesitating pupil: "Time flies, death waits, heaven invites, hell threatens!" —H. E. W.

"Yet in the mist and clutch of mortal powers,
My eyes, still loath the blinding vast to meet,
Dream backward in the dusk to sun-lit hours,
Where all the shining ways with songs were fleet,
And all the blue-eyed days with flowers were sweet,
Nay, all my heart was full of songs and flowers."

The plan for spending Christmas among "great vols." in Evanston, however, was rather suddenly changed, and with it vanished the youthful-elderly mood of this sonnet. A letter from Williamstown tells the story concisely.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

DEAR MICHEL:

You are to know, sir, that I have with the dispatch of Hannibal and the decisiveness of J. Cæsar become one of you married men,—the event being celebrated on Xmas Day, in this year of our Lord nineteen hundred six.

Yours,
Dec. 27, 1906. S. P. S.

The wedding, at the Mearses' home, was a very quiet one; only members of the two families and two or three old friends were present. The ceremony was performed by Dr. David Mears, an uncle of the bride.

On the way back to Illinois the Shermans stopped at Schenectady to see Stuart's mother, who was there for the winter with her younger son John. She had had an illness, and Stuart wrote to her in some anxiety as soon as he returned to Evanston.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

Evanston, Ill.
Jan. 1, 1907.

DEAREST MOTHER:

Please drop me a line before long telling me the truth about how you feel. I hated to leave you there so much alone as you are—and you ought to be reclining on a divan with a son at your elbow all the time. I was very very glad that we stopped over there with you.—You know I admire you tremendously,

don't you, mother? My ambition is to "burn my own smoke" as my mother does.—And then you are to be thanked—no, that's not the way to say it—but you know how deeply I appreciate the way you took this escapade of ours. You took it so because you had an understanding heart and an understanding head too —Bless you mother.—Well m'wife and I are out in 2034 again. We had some minor difficulties to solve—but trust patience and time for the way.

I hope Jack brought you something from the library to read. I found your "Uncle William" on my table when I arrived; also your good letter. For both many thanks.—Jack's a great boy, isn't he.—I hope you'll find things smoothening out there in the New Year—May it grow happier to you both. God bless you, mother dear.

Yours,-STUART.

Some reasons for the sudden change of plan (the date of the marriage had been set for June) are indicated by a passage in a later letter to Woodbridge: "Did I tell you in my hasty note that it seemed to me imperative to rescue her [Ruth] from her school? With that and outside lectures, and visiting patients for the Mass. Gen. Hospital, and about 40 other things she was on the high road to a collapse. But by the blessing of God we are safe out of that now and sailing serenely.—We shall have some interesting little problems in housekeeping to solve, but where, Sir, will you find two heads more capable of solving them?"

The central question of housing was temporarily answered by an arrangement which gave the Shermans rooms and "kitchen privileges" at 2034 Orrington Avenue. This plan had obvious disadvantages, but it enabled them to have the fun of getting some of their meals at home, and relieved them from the necessity of renting an apartment which they might not want to keep after the end of the college year.

To his mother, who had given the young people experienced counsel about the difficulties of adjustment in the new adventure of marriage, he wrote: "We have failed to realize your prognostications for the troublous early weeks of life together. Everything has gone with perfect serenity and matter-of-fact simplicity."[4]

[4]Letter of January 11, 1907.

The letters to Woodbridge during the rest of this year show an amusing contrast in tone with those which have been quoted. They are much less profane and lyrical, much more serene and contented. They exhibit a sudden preoccupation with practical questions, such as the cost of the necessary minimum of furniture for a house. "N. B. I am *very* curious to know what you think of the housekeeping business.—How does it go? Can you make any harmony between it and these ridiculous incomes of instructors? Lord, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" But the significant thing is the cheerful peace of mind which the letters reveal. Commenting on some verses his friend had sent him apropos of his marriage, he says: "I am especially contented with the conceit of paying life the 'highest compliment.' You are quite right, sir, and i' faiks it's no bad game to compliment the jade ever and anon. She does better by ye along o' that. . . . Gin she thinks ye dinna care a lick of yer fingers for her, she'll whistle ye down the wind as soon as anither. But after all, sir, there's a 'struggling radiancy' of being 'white' about Life."

He was working as hard as ever on his courses; but he had now a thoroughly sympathetic companion and colleague at home. Pleasant glimpses of this collaboration and comradeship appear in various letters. "You should have seen us last night preparing our lecture for to-day on Kingsley—I writing the lecture, Ruth at hand reading the novels for me that I hadn't read and giving me the gist, etc. Worked great." A letter from Ruth gives another thumb-nail sketch: "My Lord and Master sits opposite me deep in a lecture on Dickens. He is supported in this trial by some of the best coffee he ever drank, which for this *one and only* time I made for him myself at 10 P. M. . . . He has such a hard and continuous struggle to keep up with his classes that he scarcely has a moment to smoke. It's almost neck and neck between 'em, as near as I can make out. At any moment he expects them to get beyond him for good and all! It makes life so difficult to have this competition!"[5]

Another letter of Sherman's comments briefly on his method of lecturing: "I lecture regularly only in 19th cent. prose. The course meets twice a week. . . . Began by writing out lect.

[5]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, February 20, 1907.

in full—some 18 pages of Ms.—have dropped now to about 10 pp.—occasionally only 4–5. . . . Use Babbitt's method—pound and pound on central ideas till their ears ache. . . ."[6] Still another suggests that he was developing a sort of missionary fervor and sometimes succeeded in converting himself. "I'm dead stuck on lecturing to the young 'uns on 19th cent. prose and its connexions with their temporal and eternal salvation. . . . I made high water mark of the course with Dickens, though I hadn't expected to. They all thought he was great . . . even such as had been wont to assume (like myself and yourself) an attitude of rather lofty superiority to C. D. I'm really thinking that he had more indubitable genius than any other prose writer of the century excepting Carlyle. Limitations, of course—but so's the Almighty. In fact, as I told a class the other day, Pope and those fellows had just that attitude toward the Almighty—a creature of almost unlimited genius and creative power,—but no talent, no art—rough and barbarous, had to be polished by the 'classic age.'"[7] The inspiration of that midnight coffee was evidently potent.

At times he was worried because the reading and preparation for his lectures took so much time and energy that he had scarcely any left for other writing. It must be remembered that this was his first year of teaching, and that he was carrying four courses, three of which required a large amount of preparatory reading. Writing to congratulate Woodbridge on having sold a couple of poems to a magazine, he laments his immersion in university work, but consoles himself with the reflection that marriage seems to be a stimulus to the Muse.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

2034 Orrington Ave.,
[Jan.] 31, '07.

DEAR MICHEL:

Your letter tickles and enrages me to the verge of death. Delighted beyond words to think that you have achieved authorship at a slap, and irked equally to think that while you

[6]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, January 31, 1907.
[7]To the same, March 22, 1907.

are about to wake up and find yourself famous I am sleeping on in the unflowered fields of pedagogy. Note how naïvely I own my envy. My companions all stealing past me in the night —the subtle thief of youth hath stolen away my ¼ century. . . . You'll have to confess it's burgesshood has done it. When we two were sons of storm, swept to and fro by the eternal belly-ache—the world wanted none of us. Now that you've begun to compliment life, she salutes you with a friendly mien. It also adds relish that your Muse hearkens to the domestic prayer. An income-eeker has sweet poesie become. Well, when I've been keeping house as long as you have perhaps I shall find the unreplenished bread-box full of divine ideas, and the wind and rain of a leaky roof "voluntary move harmonious numbers." . . .

The lack of time for writing became particularly vexatious when an opportunity for publication offered itself. "I'll tell you a sad blow I had the other day. Mr. Henry Holt, it seems, in looking over some things of my Aunt's with a view to publication, chanced to be pleased with a couple of 'Letters from a Nephew to his Aunt' which she had included in her article on the decay of letters. Mr. Holt inquires the author and his address, writes to me, asks if I have anything to print, and will I send it to him for inspection. Euhoe—and weylawey. He asks me also what I'm teaching. I writes back a lugubriously jocose epistle saying as how I have nothing, and how can he ask both questions of the same man." . . .[8] Later at Illinois, when he had his courses thoroughly worked out, Sherman solved this problem triumphantly, largely, as he said, by having all his lectures "canned" so that he needed only half an hour or so by way of preparation to freshen up a lecture.

An amusing combination of poetry with domesticity appears in a letter of acknowledgment for a belated wedding present—a tea set of red Izomu ware.

God, Michel!—It's hopeless for me to enter upon my gratitude, Sir and Madam, for that ravishing box. It came before a tolerably early breakfast. "Lord!" says I to m'wife, "we must open that at once!" . . . Madam and Sir, Sir and Madam,

[8]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, March 2, 1907.

'tis a service for the Muses, for the young-eyed cherubim. My heart is enditing, "'Tis damn fine!"— Nor can I raise a cup to my lips without drinking oblivion to leagues and hills and days and communion with "all old things and all things dear." . . .[9]

The irrepressible conflict between poetry and domesticity, on the other hand, is playfully celebrated in some verses written in February:

EVENING PRAYER OF THE LITTLE DREAMS

Now we lay us down to sleep,—
We are little dreams that weep,
  Tucked in our eternal bed;
Lord, we know we ne'er shall wake,
Pity us for Jesus' sake
  When all our limbs are lapped in lead.
  In his heart and in his head
We used to wake and used to sleep,
And many merry revels keep,
  Clad in blue and clad in red.
Sometimes he sent us to the skies,
Sometimes we laughed in his love's eyes
  When over her his tears were shed.
  She is come, and in our stead
Sinks him, lifts him up above,
Waking, sleeping, has his love,
  Revels in his heart and head,
  Drinks our wine and eats our bread,
Comes between us and our right,
Drives us to the winter night,—
  Us that in his palace fed!
She has hardened all his heart,
Undefended we depart,
  Ancient friends for whom he bled.
  Lord, when we are cold and dead,
What will happen to us all?
Shall we go where tear drops fall?
  Shall we flee where roses fled?

[9]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, March 2, 1907.

If he sorrow for us make,
Call for us with woe and ache,
Pity him for Jesus' sake,—
Now our little prayer is said.

A similar sense of the hostility between poetry and life is expressed in a letter to Woodbridge written at the end of the year: "All poetry is a dream of a lost Eden or an Eden to be. It has somehow been growing heavily on me that all poetry is the Enemy of Life. I'm in confusion about it—tormented with a desire for it; daily clearer that you can't have both. The Celtic world of romance is only a more perfectly sustained struggle of the Dream against the Reality . . . a more completely elaborated trance. Harmony and the ideal tone are only to be gained by enormous abstractions from reality,—I should much like to chew this stem with you.—On the whole I find the power of life to interest rather stronger '*in dies*.' But life, she is a more remorseless creature than any man has ever yet uttered. Life herself with all her beauties and splendors—she is your true vampire.—I have been reflecting on the 'cruelty of beauty'—your theme—which has led me on to this: The πού στῶ of every kindness is a cruelty—which I offer as a candidate for the tragicalest of all facts."[10]

When a friend urged him to send some of his verse to magazines he insisted that it was unworthy of print—"Lord, I send you these things as I would *swear*, in your most soft society—and no more."

Meantime the question of work for the next year was impending. Northwestern was willing to offer an advance of $200 in salary, but no immediate promotion. But Dean Clark of Urbana, whose persistence in pursuit fairly rivaled that of the Hound of Heaven, was again on his trail. In March he wrote to Sherman, recalling his earlier offers, and inquiring "whether or not you would be willing to come to the university, and on what terms, if any, you would be willing to come here." He prepared the way at Urbana by gathering a new sheaf of recommendations from Harvard and Northwestern and persuading the departments of English and Rhetoric to nominate Sherman as "Associate" in English at a salary of $1,500. Sherman replied,

[10]Letter of July 5, 1907.

in effect, that though for various reasons he should be reluctant to leave Northwestern, he would consider a salary of $1,500, with an assistant professorship either at the beginning or at the end of the first year. Since at Illinois the rank of "associate" is between those of "instructor" and "assistant professor," it was not difficult for him, after an interview with Dean Clark in Chicago, to accept the proffered terms. Dean Clark assured him that the road to promotion was open; and his friend Madison Bates, who had been teaching at Urbana for a year, wrote to him with enthusiasm about the university.

In April the Shermans visited Urbana at the invitation of Professor and Mrs. Bartow—old friends of the Mears family. Stuart was pleasantly surprised by the appearance of the university. "The campus and buildings," he wrote to his mother, "are splendidly laid out—most impressive scale I've seen yet. There are about 4000 students."[11] With Mr. Bartow's help they quickly found "a house in process of building—frame all up—brown stained shingles going on the sides—6 rooms and an attic, furnace, bath, rain and hard water, gas and electricity, cemented cellar, hardwood floors"—which they rented at a very moderate figure. Madison Bates drove them out to Brownfield woods, three or four miles from Urbana, where they were delighted with the profusion of spring flowers.

Attractive as the university seemed, however, it was with real regret that Stuart left Evanston, chiefly for a reason mentioned in a letter to Woodbridge. "Of course, it was manifest destiny to go in view of the opening and the better salary. I hope the place will discover some not uncongenial soul. Personally I hate like h——l to leave my colleague Goddard behind. I hadde liever than my shirte you might know him—a philosopher both theoretical and practical, a poet, both lyric and dramatic, a damn fine English teacher, and a master of the humorous and comic spirit at all hours,—at the same time grave, capacious, and subtlest of all beasts of the field. The only fault I have to find with him is that he doesn't smoke and very rarely swears."[12]

After packing their furniture during examination week, the Shermans went to Dorset for a month's vacation. They then

[11]Letter to Mrs. Sherman, April 29, 1907.

[12]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, June 20, 1907.

went down to Boston and devoted two weeks to work in the Boston Public Library, making careful copies of early quarto texts of the two Ford plays which Stuart had undertaken to edit. This was a laborious task; as Ruth recalls it, each copy "was compared word for word three times" with the original. Then came a visit to Nottingham. "Had a fine time, incidentally saving the Prof. from death by tedium in that rural retreat. He and I cut down apple-trees, carpentered, made a clubhouse out of his shop, and smoked quantities of the local 6 for 25¢ cigar."[13] Also there were fishing trips, on one of which "we caught 20 pounds of fish—100 capita." Returning to Boston, the Shermans took a boat to Norfolk, Virginia, stopped over to see Washington, and there took the train for Urbana.

[13]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, August 14, 1907.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

WHEN the Shermans came to the University of Illinois, in 1907, it was beginning to take its place with the leading universities of the West. There was about it a feeling of growth and large hopes that captured the imagination. Its president, E. J. James, a man of sturdy democratic instincts imbued with the German ideal of scholarship, was possessed with the dream of creating, with the aid of the common man, an institution which would not only serve his common needs but provide him with standards of intellectual excellence and justify the democratic faith. By the sheer earnestness of his conviction he infected others with his enthusiasm, and by his practical sagacity in dealing with men he soon gave to his conception a tangible measure of reality. In making appointments and promotions he applied true university tests with a rigor that often appeared to be pedantic. An emphasis on research and publication seemed to involve a neglect of teaching and personality, but the obvious result was a rapid heightening of the educational prestige of the University of Illinois. In the course of a few years many departments—humanistic as well as scientific—were placed on a high, even a distinguished, level by the appointment of capable and eminent scholars. While Sherman was not in sympathy with all of the president's policies and standards, he had the heartiest admiration for his character and his vigorous leadership, and he came to believe firmly in his fundamental aims.

The dean of the College of Literature and Art was Professor E. B. Greene, a man who later proved his loyalty to scholarship by withdrawing successively from the duties of dean and head of department in order to devote himself without disturbance to the study of American history. Of the finest New England breeding, he combined with the sensitive responsibility which is characteristic of that race a rare gentleness of manner.

His scrupulous honor, his native dignity, his purity and elevation of character inspired those who knew him with respect and affection and were among the significant influences of the place. Professor Greene, even more than President James, made Illinois seem a desirable place for Sherman to work and live in, and the removal of this good friend to Columbia in 1923 was perhaps one of the occurrences which shook his attachment to the university.

The Department of English was not, in 1907, among the strong divisions of the university, but it was undergoing general rehabilitation. The two independent departments of Rhetoric and English Literature were merged, and Professor C. N. Greenough was brought from Harvard to apply the talents of organization which he had displayed conspicuously in English A, though he was not made chairman until 1908. His problems were by no means simple. They included the devising of machinery for the large freshman course in composition and creating the conditions for work leading to a doctorate. The personnel at his disposal was better adapted for the first task than for the second. There were but two full professors in a department of twenty-five men and women. There was a group of alert and promising younger men, but only a few had the doctor's degree. It was a situation which offered every opportunity for the ambitious and well-equipped teacher.

The Shermans came to their new home in August during the scorching midsummer heat of the prairies, but no discomfort could spoil the fun of taking possession of the house and arranging their household gods. "We've been settling like fiends for the last two weeks," Sherman wrote early in September; "evenings I've been ready to drop into my bunk. So has my spouse into hers. But it's worth while. Housekeeping for yours. Scrubbing floors and windows we take with a 'frolic welcome.' It's 10° hotter than Hades here: but otherwise nice. 100° in the shade seems to be normal August weather. . . . Evanston was a sort of airier Williamstown. Urbana is the real Western-America, of the Dickens type a little."[1]

As far as the business of teaching was concerned Sherman still gave evidence of a soul divided between a longing for creative

[1]To Homer Woodbridge, September 2, 1907.

activity and an effort to find its satisfaction in the soberer vocation he had adopted. There is an air of resigned melancholy in a letter to Homer Woodbridge written as he was about to face his classes for the first time at the University of Illinois. "Man," he says, "is a hungry living case enclosing the cadaver of a soul. The Body is the Soul's parasite, feeble in infancy, softly and sweetly veiling the splendor which shines through it; finally absorbing it (S.) utterly, leaving a dry diaphanous frame, like the white skeleton of a fern at the end of autumn—or an ungilt and disenchanted butterfly. . . . To tell the truth, Michel, I am coming nearer and nearer to the status of the perfect man which is in M. McLeod. . . . The McLeodian conception of the Soul and its place in the Universe has its incontestable advantages. —The Soul is like a nerve in a corrupting tooth; kill it, or it will ache. Mine is nearly dead; at least *manageably* dead. Only now and then I feel it

'feebly pull
Thinly imploring something beautiful.'

Then I sit down, if I have time, and write a few poor verses—of doggerel—and send them to you, or Goddard, or better yet, lay them away in the drawer. Or else I grow mere melancholy, and burn it off in the bowl of my pipe. . . .

"Sometimes I think 'tis not so much that the Soul is dead, but (optimistically) that it is finding with the years its proper activity—in the household, classroom, on the woodpile, etc. Being more exercised, it is less restless. But when I say this to myself, I know that in part, at least, I lie. I enjoy carpentering, for example, the polishing and staining of wood, and miscellaneous puttering about the place. When so occupied I feel a certain well-being and a perfect slumber of the soul. But it can't be sustained—it's drugging, no more. One wakes again with the intensest psychic belly-ache—and the still small voice of the Everlasting Worm cries: 'What are you about'?—Harry of course has come round to the right way of looking at his 'art.' . . . I have no 'art': only the damnedest desire of one; but I should never have wandered as he has. . . .

"When my Son or Daughter arrives, he or she is going to have a chance to learn an Art, with the consent of God, and if there is no fire given from on High, then a handicraft, and in

my present opinion—an education be damned—or got because wanted and only because wanted."[2]

This was a mood which was to visit him from time to time in the years that followed, as may be seen in a troubled entry from a journal of two years later: "*Je ne sais quoi* put out of mood for work this A. M.—Sat by window, with huge desire to be coal-heaver, watching house building across the alley. Brain sensation as of nausea at 'intellectual life.' The task ahead, lecture on Romantic Movement, would not appear worth the State's pay.—The beautiful mortar mixer, enviable, had a perfectly definite task; he was making good mortar for a useful purpose. Another in blue overalls was digging a neat ditch for sewer-pipe. Another with cheerful pipe carried a full hod up a ladder, and returned with an empty one, having accomplished that whereunto he was sent. These people were all doing good works, providing human shelter, sanitation, etc.

"The house is built for a person, according to rumor, of no great repute or virtue. These men are all working to keep her alive. She will also work to keep alive students who will board at her house. The students will perhaps come to my lecture room to hear what I have to say.

"They are all preparing for something; and the only thing worth while is the preparation."[3]

But these moods did not prevent his plunging into the teaching of his courses with an intense absorption, leaving little time for other work or for play. He taught Shakespeare and Seventeenth Century drama. He developed for graduate students his courses on the romantic movement of the Eighteenth Century and on the intellectual leaders of the Nineteenth, through both of which he solidified the background for his writing, and he also for a time took his share of the burden in teaching the elements of composition. Of the last activity he speaks at the outset as if he took real pleasure in it: "I too am now a theme-reader, 160 per week (I expect an assistant later). Themes I had none at Northwestern, neither. I enjoy them, however, immensely, and 'am not sorry at all.'"[4] But a few weeks later his tone is different: "I have corrected 60 exam. papers of 20

[2]September 13, 1907.

[3]September 30, 1909.

[4]To Homer Woodbridge, October 1, 1907.

questions each and c. 40 long themes on this Holy Day of Rest."[5]

A letter written early in his second year at Illinois gives a general view of his teaching, with a hint at the absence of intellectual vivacity in his colleagues:

"My own character I find in the Byronic masterpiece of Edward Young, D. D.:

> "'What numbers, sheath'd in erudition, lie
> Plunged to the hilts in venerable tomes,
> And rusted in, who might have borne an edge
> And play'd a sprightly beam, if born to speech.'

There is not much converse among the members of our society here; and the mind driven into its burrow emerges blear-eyed and sluggish.

"Among the pleasures of the new year for me is a class of 60 in Freshman Rhetoric; by the Lord, when I've roared at them for an hour, I don't wonder old G. L. K. lost his temper from time to time. I'm having a good time, however, in the Romantic Movement. So far the authors have not been this side 1750; but at present I find Pope and Prior more romantic than Wordsworth and Shelley. Singular how well the age of Anne serves for an asylum to the modern mind. I can 'escape' into the 'Essay on Man' or Prior's epigrams as our great-grandfathers (if they read such rot) escaped into 'Endymion' or 'Epipsychidion.' The 'land where I am not,' is a most variable territory.—According to my way of thinking, by the way, Mr. Sam'l Johnson is the best fellow in modern times—perhaps in all times.

"Privately speaking, I don't think so much of women's suffrage and co-education as I did in New York. These pillowy co-eds do irritate me in the long run. Who is that poet that talks about 'thinking God's thoughts before Him'? That is the way I feel when I try to get these female scholars to write a little essay or read a little book. Can't find anything, see anything, till you've laid your finger on it and called it by its name. By the way, I have one man in each of my graduate courses;

[5]To Homer Woodbridge, November 22, 1907.

one . . . who did two years graduate work at Harvard; the other, an East Indian who has more ideas than the rest of the two classes put together—a little chocolate-colored chap with black hair and glowing eyes, who comes out with a thrust at contemporary politics and other follies as if he had a mind. He is a nationalist and patriot as well, and is ultimately going to assist his countrymen in giving the British Hell. I am doing my best to assist him with ammunition out of J. S. Mill."[6]

While Sherman's concentration upon his work involved a deliberate check on his social impulses, he was assisted in self-discipline by the absence of serious distractions in his surroundings. A flat, colorless town, unlighted and poorly paved, set in a broad prairie landscape whose charm had to be won by long and loving observation, Urbana offered no allurement out of doors, unless in the first days of spring or certain golden weeks of October when there was a feeling of poetry in the "ripe old yellows of the cornfield, and tawny, golden and brown glints through the sunny fields, stooked corn and glamorous mist, and flights of blackbirds from the dreamy forestry."[7] The green spaces of the campus and the noble rows of trees formed the most attractive spot in the neighborhood.

Sherman was almost completely aloof from the athletic contests of the students. He could enjoy such things well enough, but in his first three years at Illinois he saw exactly two games, and his attendance in later years was even less frequent. He might have enjoyed going to the theater, but the character of the occasional road company that visited Champaign or Urbana was not likely to tempt him to close his volume of Webster or Massinger. As for the common social routine, there were features of it that simply could not be escaped. Dislike them as one might, it was necessary to go through with a certain amount of calling, afternoon teas and dinners. When it came to bridge, he buried a secret hankering and gave people to understand that he did not know one card from another. It was some years before he relaxed this rigor and consented to join a bridge club of his more intimate friends. To compensate for his self-denial in this direction Sherman indulged his fondness for singing by joining the Choral Society of the university and re-

[6]To Homer Woodbridge, November 4, 1908.

[7]Letter to Carl Van Doren, October 12, 1910.

hearsing with it once a week. A number of years later he became one of a small group that met once a month to study religion and related subjects in their vital rather than antiquarian aspects. The leading spirit of the group was Dean Greene, and it included President James, Dean Daniels, Professors B. H. Bode, A. S. Pease, G. S. Ford, R. M. Alden, L. M. Larson, and E. L. Bogart. Sherman once sketched a program for this club in which the topics were assigned to the members with a certain sly innuendo. President James was to exhibit his conception of "God as Administrator"; Professor Pease, the classicist, was to talk on "The Conservative Principle"; Professor Greene, with his leaning to high Episcopalianism, on "The New Sacerdotalism," and Professor Bode, the pragmatist, on "The Anarchic Principle." The most intimate social contacts which he and Mrs. Sherman formed were with the families of Dean Greene, Professors Daniels, Greenough, Pease, H. B. Ward, C. W. Alvord, and Edward Bartow.

There was not much occasion for writing letters to friends who lived within calling distance, but occasionally Sherman indulged himself in the luxury. Once when Professor Pease sent him reprints of several learned articles[8] he made the following acknowledgment:

(*To Professor A. S. Pease*)

1016 W. Nevada St., Urbana, Ill.,
October 18, 1910.

My dear Pease:

I have postponed thanking you for the learned *opuscula* brought to me by the hand of my wife, dealing with Augustine and the customs of the heathen nations—I have postponed thanking you, I say, till I could survey their contents more narrowly, and form deliberate conclusions as to their contributiveness to the sum of universal knowledge.

After maturely perusing the fine pebble work of Augustinian collation and rolling under my tongue the succulent notes of

[8]The titles of the articles were: "A Harvard Manuscript of St. Augustine" (1910), "Notes on St. Jerome's Tractates on the Psalms" (1907), and "Notes on Stoning among the Greeks and Romans" (1908).

the *Hieronyminian tractates* on the Psalms I cast my undivided vote for stoning. Stoning for mine. What particularly engaged my attention in this delightful *discursus* was its conclusion. I do not mean by this to intimate that my frivolity so overtopped my scholarly curiosity that I began at the end and read backward. I mean that it was a distinct surprise and pleasure to discover that stoning may be envisaged as "real patriotism," and by the irrefragable authority of the ancients. I confess that in my secret meditations I had often come to the point where I hoped there might be—when I felt there ought to be—some sanction for it. But when I fell in your treatise upon the Q. E. D. demonstration, I cried, "Come, is there no longer occasion for real patriotism? Let us up, *more Macedonum*, gather stones, and go forth. There are at least three cases where stoning——." With these words still on my lips I rushed into the street, and stopped to collect the necessary instruments of my ardor. Alas, my mouth was stopped with dust. No more at this time. Commend me *omnibus apostolis et cherubim et pisis quibus sit gloria in saecula saeculorum.*

S. P 'S.

As in his college days Sherman's associations and friendships were with men much older than himself. Younger men stood in some awe of him and hesitated to make advances. To some his manner appeared distant and at times disdainful. Doubtless he did not always succeed in concealing his impatience with the indolent and flat-minded. "How deeply one sympathizes with your damnation of one's colleagues!" he wrote to a friend.[9] But no one who came to him for advice or stimulation went away empty handed.

Friendly as were Sherman's relations with several of his senior colleagues, a man of twenty-six does not become really intimate in a few months with much older men who outrank him in the academic hierarchy. And Sherman felt keenly the need of intimate comradeship. "I find that life as a teacher is a good thing only in the colleagueship of true souls," he wrote to Homer Woodbridge. " . . . Don't be a pup—speak up and tell me of your soul, and your family, and your intentions, and

[9]To Homer Woodbridge, January 21, 1907.

your prospects, and your poverty and your verses, and all those things that we have in common."[10] An earlier letter had already described a colleague after Sherman's own heart: "There's a young fellow here that you would like to know—Carl Van Doren—instructor, handsome pup, poick, *philosophe*, midnight owler, book collector. There seems to be one soul at least to every 50,000 inhabitants almost anywhere. I'll send you a copy of his verses, if I can get hold of them. . . . The trouble here is, one never gets a night off for owling (we had one in all). Devilish busy place."[11]

With Van Doren, nevertheless, he spent many lively hours overhauling the stores of English and American literature, railing at philologians, or arguing the relative virtues of East and West. When Van Doren went to Columbia in the fall of 1908 to continue his studies Sherman made him his purchasing agent for copies of the Elizabethan dramatists and the Eighteenth Century poets and critics which he then needed in his work, or made use of him to hunt up references on John Ford, couching his request in a gay Euphuism that must have made compliance a pleasure: "Necessity is the mother of Impudence and you are the Father of a Pleasant Disposition (a natural child). If my Impudence and your Pleasant Disposition could put up with each other and unite—why, they would bring forth a Bouncing Convenience and a Desperate Obligation at a birth."[12] In return he sent him advice, some of it serious and some light-hearted, on proper subjects for a doctoral dissertation, suggesting as suitable models for scholarly method Miss Agnes Repplier and Mr. G. K. Chesterton. He also wrote him a doleful account of life in Urbana to make him feel how sadly the bright flow of his conversation was missed: "We keep on making committees, catalogues, etc., etc., and leading a dog's life generally. The most horrible thing about a university is the intellectual silence and isolation of the place. Besides, since the snow has melted, it grows harder and harder to bag the fugitive rabbit. However we have a domesticated one minus the ears, and a tame bear right in the house. Also Prince Daggum-Wicggum yields considerable sport, now that he has found his

[10]April 15, 1908.

[11]To the same, January 29, 1908.

[12]January 20, 1910.

feet and can get away on a good 25 yds. dash. Nevertheless, I would to God, as one of Tennyson's girls says, that you were here, letting your light shine."[13]

Another letter shows him again as the delighted beneficiary of a raid on the bibliopoles instigated, in recognition of a birthday, by one whom he calls his "Business Manager":

"The Book-Plot has been sprung. It was a howling success. Sitting here in the silence and seclusion of my study under the shadow of *The Complete Intellectual System* and other giant folios—reminding one of the crumbling vestments of a mummy —I am rapt with wonder at the deep-dyed daring, scope and secrecy of the whole affair. I am also smitten with amazement at the pure cold nerve shown by my Business Manager in asking you to scour all Gotham for all these works. I am astounded furthermore at the intuition exhibited by you in your choice of masterpieces. I apologize to you as a Christian (*I* a Xian, not you) for the imposition; as a mere scholar, I do not apologize. I'm damned glad of it. Scholarship justifies anything. You have suffered in the interests of Science.

"Particularly I thank you for Hall. I suppose that was to punish me for my orthodoxy. It is the only one that I've had time to read. Cudworth I may be able to finish this evening. But by the way, when you speak to babes and sucklings like Bates about my doxy, you should always call it neo-orthodoxy. To say that people like Me and Chesterton have returned to orthodoxy is as much as to say that we have returned to bib and tucker. Have you read Chesterton's Shaw?—I've forgotten whether you went before my advance sheets came or not—'tis good stuff.—Speaking of good stuff, I was sold on the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. 'Twas a 2 shilling a volume Bell reprint of Bohn library in flexible small cloth. And I wanted a tall Bullen or a folio! A hot appearance this school-girl edition makes beside my stout Dutch Elzevir, my honest buff Boileau, the Fletchers, Crabb Robinson, Hall, Davies, and Co. How did you get so much for so little?"[14]

Prince Daggum-Wicggum, mentioned in the last letter but one, is a new and important personage in the story. His arrival was certainly, from his father's point of view, the most im-

[13]March 6, 1909.

[14]To Carl Van Doren, October, 1909.

portant event of the years at Illinois. In congratulating a friend on a similar occasion, some four months earlier, he had referred to it as "the Adventure of all Adventures." "My own feeling," he said, "about bringing a son into the world is that it is rather disrespectful for a young couple to create grandfathers and grandmothers. It's almost too cold-blooded a fashion of reminding their parents that they are growing old—three generations ago.—Then there is the counter-feeling that you are yourself shoved back one row—you are no longer the 'younger generation'—the hopes of the years no longer depend so solely on you. You have made way for younger destinies.—A burden more for yourself, to be sure—but a new propitiatory offering—a sort of beckoning the Immortals toward the cradle, a sort of waving them away from ourselves. This is a thought that I ponder and find comfort in."[15]

John Mears Sherman was born on November 4, 1907, and thereafter appears prominently in his father's letters under various titles—Prince Daggum Wicggum, Pol-Davy, Mr. Wallop, Chunk. In announcing his arrival to old friends Sherman described him fully: "He is said to be quite tall for his age. Today he clasped my hand between his upper and fore arm with the strength of a young blacksmith. His eyes are very deep blue—keen and intelligent—very! . . . His expression is steady, composed, self-poised. . . . He is not at all nervous—yells a reasonable amount when he thinks reforms ought to be instituted—not at all for mere gush or sentiment."[16] Rallied for his exhibition of doting paternal pride, he retorted: "A new baby in a little house is as absorbing as a toothache, or as an arrow through the heart. . . . If I were in a pet over your remarks, I might refrain from giving you any information for the rest of time. On the contrary, so far as ink and time and strength endure, I shall send you the record of every YELL."[17]

With a conscious sense of belonging to the guild of fathers, he writes at the same time to Mr. Carlton Smith:

"Isn't it fortunate that we have wives in the crises of our lives when our children are born? I sent you a long and hearty message by wireless telegraph congratulating you upon the ad-

[15]To Homer Woodbridge, July 5, 1907.

[16]To the same, November 11, 1907.

[17]To the same, November 29, 1907.

STUART SHERMAN AT SIX, WITH HIS SISTERS
PERSIS AND KATHERINE

vent of the daughter. In the wireless message I promised to write at once. My son, however, peremptorily demanded my attention in the possible hours. Mrs. S. alone saved the day. Lord, how these little angels do *disguise* themselves at times. We do not think our son an unusually boisterous fellow, but he does prolong the night and fill out the crevices of the day.—Still, to you, a father of some years' standing, I can tell no news of these matters.—Well, we old people have not done badly—? two boys and two girls to the three of us. I wonder if they will ever go camping together on Bald Mt. as we did so many years ago when we were young, and careless, and gay—and even sentimental. Didn't it give you a solemn moment when you first stepped back to give place to the younger generation?"[18]

A year later: "J. M. S.'s [vocabulary] has not got beyond 'See there' and 'Oly goat'—and I don't know exactly what he means by the latter phrase, though I like its flavor."[19] The following spring he writes to Harold Goddard: "How is Eleanor? Her cousin Daggum-Wicggum walks, and not only walks but trots, and not only trots but runs." And again to Goddard: "We trust your heir has continued to grow in grace and favor with God and man. Ours is a regular *ours*—Rocky Mt. grizzly and a mad romp. I've got him now to the point where he handles our heavy coal-shovel in the cellar almost as well as I. Mrs. S. P. S. thinks that not much to boast of."[20] From the first Sherman was the most appreciative and devoted of fathers. To some of his friends, indeed, his fondness seemed excessive to a fault, and they thought it fortunate that family discipline did not depend entirely on him.

To the children of his imagination he was always a much less indulgent parent, but in 1908 he seriously considered publishing a volume of poems with his friend Woodbridge, responding with a good will to the latter's proposal: "As for your Book of Verses and your invitation to collaborate—Amen and swelp me G.—it pleases me to the verge of extinction. As for anonymity, tho, let us have none of it. If 'twere a big publishing house, perhaps!—just for a sendoff. But my opinion is that it would do

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[18]November 28, 1907.

[19]To Homer Woodbridge, November 22, 1908.

[20]March 27, 1909.

us more good to be torn to shreds by 'bilious reviewers' than to be received with indifference. Now I think we can produce a book of such *positive* qualities (bad or good) as will force attention. . . . Well, the long and short of it is, I'm for you. Guess I can raise thirty of my kind. . . . My imagination chortles over the prospect."[21]

The manuscript was actually prepared and submitted to the publishers, who turned out to be of the parasite type. They would be glad to publish the poems but did not feel that they would be justified in assuming the entire risk; they were prepared, however, to offer very advantageous terms. The formula is well known to the experienced; it means, of course, that the publisher hopes to make his money by exploiting the vanity of the author, not by selling the books to the public. In this instance the authors, however vain and inexperienced, were not blind enough to fall into the trap. Sherman's reaction was vigorous.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

May 20, 1908.

DEAR MICHEL:

Yours to hand—with enclosure from Blanket, Blank & Co. The devil d——n the Blanket family and the Blank family & Co.! Some day they will be sorry—when they see my picture coming out in the *Literary Digest*. Personally I don't care a rip about their little printing shop—it was almost worth while for the sake of the letter you wrote them. I can hardly help even a little twinge of pity for their lost opportunity. They probably don't guess what they are missing—the reputation of their whole house, perhaps. I am glad of the chance to get my stuff into shape, and ready when Macmillan or Scribs come to me with imploring hands and a bag of red gold.—So endeth the first lesson.

While reaching out with one hand vainly toward the baffling Muse, with his other Sherman was hurling a bombshell against the entrenched commanders of the graduate study of literature. The same letter in which he declared his keen delight in the

[21]April 22, 1908.

plan for the book of poems announced that he had just sent off a slashing article to the *Nation* on the graduate schools. At a Harvard dinner in Urbana he had shortly before heard President Eliot "pat old H——d on the back—and chant the glories of the elective system and 'scholarship'—German," and he was inclined to applaud the attack delivered by John Corbin against that university and its president in the current issue of the *Atlantic*. "The younger generation," he exclaimed, "is wheeling up its guns," and he gleefully contributed his own "whole-hearted bludgeoning and horse-playing with the graduate school and the Ph. D.—one of the warmest things that was ever incubated in my penstock. . . . It was about a third part of a lecture which I delivered here; among the many virtues of the lecture in its original form is a between-the-eyes smash at the 'learned' journal, which above all other things in print I hate, and which certain ones of authority here were trying to make us give our days and nights to reading.—Uds particular Buds!—I tell you all these things because you have written lately as if just for a ribbon I had left you, and gone to the slaves—which ain't so—rather have I been scouting most daringly in the enemy's lines, mewing my eternal rage, and steeping rods in strong pickle—Yum."[22]

The article written in this gaily combative spirit[23] is of course not to be regarded as a reasoned estimate of the graduate training in English offered at Harvard or elsewhere. It is a vigorous and effective piece of controversial journalism, the sole purpose of which is to expose what seemed to Sherman the great defect of that training. To balance it, one should recall that he had once written to Dean Briggs that in Harvard he had found everything that was best in life. Those best things, however, were not a part of the regular system of graduate training; they existed in spite of the system and were rather ungraciously tolerated by it. Sherman had felt himself handicapped and

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[22]A letter to Harold Goddard gives a further glimpse of Sherman's attitude toward "learned" journals: "I haven't read the paper of my colleague to which you allude, but I have spoken to him of my pleasure in reading the title. Is that not enough? I informed him at the same time that I never cut the pages of my Mod [ern] L [anguage] Pub [lications]. I wish to enhance the value of my set for bibliophiles." January 5, 1909.

[23]*Nation*, May 14, 1908; reprinted in *Shaping Men and Women*.

hindered by the excessive emphasis placed by the system upon linguistics and the mediæval field, and these requirements had, to his personal knowledge, alienated from the graduate school men whose interest in literature was more vital than that of the average candidate for the Ph. D. He described the working of the graduate schools as a process for eliminating the best men—the men of literary taste and aspiration. It was his belief that one of the functions of graduate departments was to provide training for creative literary work, yet that function was ignored and its advocates derided. But a more serious weakness, in his mind, was the failure to treat literature as an instrument of human culture and the disposition to assimilate it to the study of the natural sciences. The purpose of teachers of English should be, he said, to add to the sum of human knowers rather than of human knowledge. "The question is whether we shall endeavor to go with our students up into a mountain top to see the glory of the world or whether we shall set them to burrowing in a gopher hole. It is clear that guides to the mountain top are not to be found on every corner; graduate schools are not producing many men who can point out the glory of the world. The scrupulous Darwinian will at once retort that the guides I am asking for are mere popular lecturers, flimsy generalizers, belle-lettristic triflers. I admit that I think we need more generalizers, though it is not essential that they be flimsy generalizers. If talking in a comprehensive way about the great men and great ideas of the world is to be popular, then we do direfully need more popular men—more men like Lowell, Arnold, Leslie Stephen, John Morley. We need men with an eye for contours and altitudes, a sense for life in its fullness, an eye for the glory of the world. Such men must be recruited mainly from those whom the graduate schools are turning away uneducated into literary hackwork, journalism, and underfed literature." Many felt as if they had been hit from ambush by one of their own allies, but there was much glee even among these who had passed through the mill. One member of the Harvard faculty, Professor Charles R. Lanman, wrote for several hundred reprints to be distributed to his colleagues in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences because, he explained to the editor, some of them "won't take your d——d paper for the reason that it contains an occasional (too occasional) article

of this kind." Though the assault may have made no visible breach in the great fortresses, there is little doubt that the challenge heartened the opposition and strengthened the faith of those who stood for the humanistic in opposition to the philological approach to literature.

CHAPTER X

THE "EVENING POST" AND THE "NATION"

THE letter on the graduate schools was the piece of writing by which Sherman first attracted general attention and which won for him an opening in the ranks of literary journalism. Hammond Lamont was editing the *Nation* at that time and, recognizing the valuable polemic temper of his correspondent, he invited him at once to try his hand at an occasional article, preferably non-political, for editorial use. Within ten days of this invitation, a member of the editorial staff of the *Evening Post* and the *Nation* being taken sick, Mr. Rollo Ogden and Lamont joined in urging Sherman to come to New York for the summer to supply the vacancy. Sherman accepted the call and had his first taste of writing for a newspaper in New York. Incidentally he renewed his friendship with Harry James Smith, who was then "free-lancing" in New York. Sherman took a room in the same house with him, and saw much of him in the course of the summer.

Writing for the editorial page of the *Evening Post* was not a violent transition for a professor of literature. Sherman's first long article was a poetic lament for the decaying academic ceremonial and for the dignified and stately ways of thought that went with it, and the last was a regretful comparison of the new University of Jena with the old. On the former theme he wrote:

"To the undergraduate the most distasteful of all things is ceremony. But it is also the most subtly formative, invisibly carving the moral lineaments gross or fine. A beautiful and elevated chapel service, a decorous university assembly, a commencement oration choice in diction and lofty in tone, the procession with its venerable pomp—how much these things have heightened his love for a hieratic order and beauty in the conduct of life the student learns in his later shocks of revulsion at the theatrical or unrestrained manner and the vulgar bearing

and language of many a popular orator and preacher. . . . We ought to preserve a fine word and fine idea from degradation; the father of all the academicians was Socrates, praying under the plane trees: 'O, Pan, and all ye gods that haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward man.'"[1]

Practically all of Sherman's long editorials that summer had to do with education and literature. In both these fields his leaning toward tradition was conspicuous as well as his sense of responsibility for the maintenance of standards. Writing on the subject of social dissipation by students he commented on the efficiency of West Point as an educational machine, attributing it in large part to a modern adherence to tried educational methods of the past and to an enforced exclusion of parasitic interests that infest our colleges and universities. "If the colleges," he concluded, "were to be actuated by no other motive than self-preservation, they must see that a challenge of luxury and a resolute return to some of the Spartan virtues of the simple life are their only means, in the long run, of preserving their influence either with the general public or with their own students."[2] He deplored in a commencement address of President Hadley a tendency to encourage the "elective system" in religion, asserting that the weakest part of the theory was "the total neglect of human nature's fundamental craving for authority in the religious world";[3] and he greeted with satisfaction signs of reaction toward the classical ideal in France and Germany. On the subject of coeducation, however, which he had had a chance to observe directly, he spoke as a modern, defending the idea itself and its success in practice as "the foundation of a new, more wholesome, and more interesting relation of the sexes."[4] And he also showed a progressive outlook when there was a chance to discuss the financial status of the college professor.

His discussions of literature were concerned to some extent with such questions as the relation of the literary art to the pictorial,[5] the effects of the artist who reveals the sense of his

[1] "The Really Academic," *Evening Post*, June 17; *Nation*, June 25, 1908.
[2] "Social Dissipation in College," *Nation*, July 16, 1908.
[3] "Aspects of Individualism," *Evening Post*, June 22; *Nation*, July 2, 1908.
[4] "A Reaction Against Coeducation," *Evening Post*, August 10, 1908. Cf. p. 162.
[5] "Border Warfare of the Arts," *Evening Post*, July 13, 1908.

tragic action and characters compared with the newspaper reporter's raw account of a crime,[6] or the absence of a school of national oratory in America.[7] But his greatest zest was displayed in shooting barbed arrows against the "decadents." He was irked at the belated symptoms of the malady in "the younger generation" of American writers. "Why," he complains, "could they not have started on the primrose way fifty or seventy-five years ago with the European pilgrims, instead of waiting till all the rouge and tinsel of iniquity pall on the heart? There is no longer anything novel or daring in being wicked in print."[8] It was a theme to which he returned time and again during the summer, for it offered him a chance to express those convictions on the relation of art to life and morals which at this time impressed him by their utter fixity. "The laws of great poetry," he affirmed, "are as old as the laws of Moses; ten thousand revolutions of taste and morality sweep over them in vain."[9] Inspired by the greater sense of direction and consciousness of the national character visible in French literature, he outlines a program for American novelists who, instead of depending for their effects on the novelty of plot, should aim, within the conventional plot, to write in harmony with the established social and political structure and win their distinction by some special grace and fineness of workmanship. "They will cordially refrain from offending the noble moral prejudices of the race; for they will find in them the helpful limitations of their best work."[10]

Sometimes he treated the decadents in a tone of suave mockery,[11] and again with all the solemn earnestness which made him seem prematurely venerable to his contemporaries, and which yet has much in it of the sheer exuberance of youth:

"The literature which makes æsthetic gratification the end of existence defeats its own end. Pursued as an ultimate goal, it

[6] "The Tragic Sense," *Evening Post*, July 25; *Nation*, July 30, 1908.

[7] "Concerning Orators," *Evening Post*, July 30; *Nation*, August 7, 1908.

[8] "Books and Reading," *Evening Post*, July 9, 1908.

[9] "Making a New Poet," *Evening Post*, July 7, 1908.

[10] "Lessons from a French Novel," *Evening Post*, July 17; *Nation*, July 23, 1908.

[11] "The Liqueur Magazines," *Evening Post*, June 22, 1908.

leads sooner or later into quagmires. The æsthete wanders from home in the quest of new and strange beauties. His truant feet stray from the classic to the romantic, and thence to the grotesque; from the moral to the unconventional, and thence to the illicit; from the sound to the unsound, and thence to the insane; from the chaste to the unchaste, and thence to the indecent. The æsthetic soul garlands a satyr and names it Apollo. It raves with absinthe and thinks it ecstasy. It falls at the feet of Magdalen and hails her as Mary. Yet the price of illicit æsthetic pleasure is the loss of all æsthetic pleasure. The unhappy man, as M. Lecomte says, who little by little allows himself to be soiled with all that filth, becomes finally insensible to a vigorous thought, an expressive portrait, or the proud wing of poetry. Dulled and stupefied by the contemplation of obscene images, he is incapable of feeling true beauty, of understanding, for example, the look and smile of La Gioconda or the harmonious and living majesty of the Victory of Samothrace."[12]

In addition to the larger articles Sherman wrote some seventy editorial paragraphs and conducted the column of "Books and Reading." In the former he touched on a considerable range of topics—social, political, and economic, falling in with the sober liberalism which marked the tone of the *Evening Post* and expressing faith in "the underlying love of justice of the great majority." While indulging himself in an occasional sneer at socialists he was nearly always sympathetic toward proposals for social betterment. He liked a victory for civic rights and defended the claims of the Philippines to independence. Toward the two presidential candidates of that year, the easy-going Taft and the verbose Bryan, he adopted an air of impartial humor, for he evidently felt in himself what he observed in the human breast in general—"an almost ineradicable instinct for puncturing bubbles, and releasing the hot air from all inflated things." He kept some specially sharp barbs in reserve for Roosevelt.

The column of "Books and Reading" was not a place for venting personal opinions, but on one occasion at least Sherman sought relief for his feeling about a certain kind of literary research. "To seek out the relations of Dante's heroine [Francesca]

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[12] "Literature and Crime," *Evening Post*, July 10; *Nation*, July 16, 1908.

to history is like inquiring whether Nausicaa had a bank account, or whether Helen of Troy was really married by a justice of the peace. . . . A pestilence take the historical iconoclasts! They would rub the bloom off an apple of the Hesperides, mistaking it for mould."[13]

Even on an editorial page as well written as that of the *Evening Post* the contributions of Sherman have a conspicuous "literary" quality. They are not the product of the pressure and topical demand of the newspaper office, but the leisure essays of a student built on a foundation of ideas, buttressed by substantial reading, and with fine chiseling of detail. There are frequent passages of firmly controlled eloquence and sentences that give a lift to the moral feelings, describing "the heat of that gallant action when the will flashes from its scabbard, and the heart cries to its destiny." In speaking of these contributions as the leisure essays of a student there is no intention of suggesting that they were the product of an easy and leisurely composition. As a matter of fact, Sherman almost wore himself out with his habitual unsparing application, and Lamont sent him off for a week-end to Williamstown, where Mrs. Sherman was staying with their boy. Characteristically Sherman used this week-end to write an essay on Walter Pater.

The editors of the *Post* were now thoroughly convinced of the desirability of attaching Sherman permanently to their staff, and in the spring of 1909 they offered him the chance to enter definitely upon the career of journalism. So attractive were the inducements that he was on the point of accepting. On the personal side, the opportunity to work in contact with men like Rollo Ogden, Hammond Lamont, and Paul E. More constituted the strongest kind of temptation. He was sure of a cordial reception from associates. Mr. Ogden wrote to him that the whole office was a-buzz with his name. The most important question was which position would offer him the most favorable conditions for doing the sort of writing that he wanted to do. He still had those ill-repressed cravings for imaginative writing. On this point Mr. More argued with him and tried to persuade him of the advantages of a New York newspaper for one who was interested in writing fiction or general criticism, while La-

[13] *Evening Post*, June 19, 1908.

mont emphasized the value of three or four years of such experience not merely for training in authorship but for increasing his efficiency as a teacher of composition and literature if he should wish to return to the college mill. Sherman went to New York in the middle of April with his mind at least half made up to close with the offer, discussed details in the most friendly manner, and went away without committing himself. On his return he was subjected to a concentrated counter-offensive. The administration was by this time fully alive to the value of what the university was in danger of losing, and showed its appreciation with a remarkably generous increase in salary as well as an advance in rank to an Associate Professorship. Sherman decided to remain. Humorously he explained to a friend that though the offer from the *Post* had seemed to him the chance of a lifetime, inertia had got the better of him and he was staying in Illinois for the sake of enjoying his private grudges.[14] This was in allusion to a former associate who had predicted that his progress would be blocked by numbers at Illinois. To Mr. Paul Elmer More he wrote (April 14th): "I have no doubt my style will smack for the sacrifice somewhat of the rustic idiom of the Po. Nevertheless, in the teeth of clenched antagonisms I intend, as Lord Tennyson said . . . to do my damndest ere I die."

The difficulty of making a decision was lightened by the fact that no doors were closed on him. "We bow in outward resignation," was Mr. Ogden's acknowledgment, "but we have rebellious thoughts. . . . Meanwhile our chosen motto remains: 'I've courted Hannah ten years, and I'll get her yet'" (April 17th). The sudden death of Hammond Lamont in the following month came too hard upon the previous negotiations to make a renewal practicable, but more than one advance was made in later years when the attraction was no longer as potent.

Though not officially attached to the *Evening Post* or the *Nation*, Sherman was for ten years virtually a staff contributor. He did not often send in editorials, but his reviews and critical essays were regular and frequent. In his first year of reviewing he covered eighty volumes, at a conservative estimate. Of these the greater number were novels and essays, but there were

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[14]Letter to H. F. Goddard, April 19, 1909.

also biography, literary history and criticism, works of pure scholarship, mediæval legends, Anglo-Saxon texts, instalments of the Oxford Dictionary, and sundry other things. He was acting on the principle which he later recommended to his students, getting in touch with the miscellaneous writing of his day, obtaining a sense of perspective and proportion, and practising the art of condensation and intensity. There being naturally among the things that came under his notice many "of those unnecessary books that the world will willingly let die,"[15] the reviews were sometimes of a routine sort, but even a stupid or worthless book could beget a crisp ironic phrase, and if it had a heretical tendency it might arouse that saturnine wit which always lurked around the corner for its destined victim. His sharp review of a poor story by Morley Roberts, *David Bran*,[16] brought an indignant protest from the publishers to the advertising manager, complaining not only of its injustice but of its bad writing; to which the editor replied that it was one of the best reviews they had published in a long time.

He was also reviewing significant writers like Galsworthy, Chesterton, and W. C. Brownell and sharpening on them the edge of his critical instrument. His standards can be recognized in his treatment of these writers, but equally well the breadth of emotional sympathy and the discriminating artistic palate which finds what there is to admire and love even in writers whose general outlook he does not approve. The humanitarianism of Galsworthy was calculated to attract the thunderbolts of any follower of Professor Babbitt's, yet Sherman goes no further in condemnation than to deplore the feebleness of the characters, as distinguished from the characterizations, and to comment on the almost tragical uncertainty as to the whereabouts of Galsworthy's divine idea of Social Justice. He shows sympathy, on the other hand, with his desire "to puncture the thoughtless complacency of the comfortable classes."[17] He is impressed with his possession of "the seriousness, the idealism, and the irony which go to the creation of tragedy,"[18] and

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[15] *Nation*, July 23, 1908.

[16] March 18, 1909.

[17] Review of Galsworthy's *A Commentary*, *Nation*, October 1, 1908.

[18] Review of Galsworthy's *Plays*, *Nation*, August 19, 1909.

he praises the breadth, variety, subtlety, and charm of his writing.[19]

Almost at the opposite pole temperamentally from the sensitive humanitarianism of Galsworthy was the jovial, robust Philistinism of Chesterton which Sherman, for all its disregard of logic and balance, tasted with enormous relish:

"With a vigorous analogical mind, one can start from anything and get to almost anything else—in time. To start from Fleet Street and land in heaven, to start from anything and land infallibly after precisely three jumps in democracy, patriotism and orthodoxy—*hoc opus, hic labor est.* This is Mr. Chesterton's feat—a few, whom just Jupiter loved, have done it. Without subscribing to all his thirty-nine articles, one may find genuine delight in at least a dozen of his philosophical parables."[20] One may judge of his comprehension of the Chestertonian character, his penetration into its very essence, and his clairvoyance into its future development from a passage in the review of *What's Wrong with the World?*

"Mr. Chesterton calls himself a Liberal; within a few years he will probably be publicly thanking God when men call him a reactionary. For at heart he is a kind of philosophical Tory—a Twentieth Century disciple of Thomas Carlyle. *What's Wrong With the World* is *Past and Present* modified by the time-spirit. The two prophets so incongruously assorted in temper, are at one in their diatribes on game-preservers, in their distrust of systematizers, in their hostility to 'philosophical radicalism,' in their fundamental dogmatism, in their respect for a somewhat remote past, and in their sense of something fixed and eternal in the needs and nature of men. The irony of the comparison is in the differences. Carlyle thought help should come from the House of Lords; Chesterton turns his back upon the Lords and calls upon the Commons. Carlyle released his thunder upon democracy; Chesterton embraces democracy and trains his guns upon Socialism. Carlyle derided manhood suffrage; Chesterton swears by manhood suffrage and makes a laughing-stock of votes for women. What will be the conservatism of 1950?"[21]

[19]Review of Galsworthy's *Fraternity*, *Nation*, May 6, 1909.

[20]Review of Chesterton's *Tremendous Trifles*, *Nation*, February 24, 1910.

[21]*Nation*, October 27, 1910.

Again, it is interesting to note how, in appraising Brownell's *American Prose Masters*, though he comments delicately on Brownell's lack of force and vitality, on the undervaluing of the elemental, the spontaneous, the old-fashioned "spiritual," his main concern is to bring out the positive distinction and importance of Brownell's ideal of intellectual refinement. "If it sets a very high price on pure intelligence, self-conscious refinement, and the new-fangled 'reality,' there is an idea affixed to every estimate, which compels the reader either to defend or abandon his prejudices. If it frequently points to an unattainable excellence, we can—as Carlyle reluctantly admitted to Emerson after expressing some regret that the Concord sage was not doing precisely what he himself was doing—'we can spare a man for that, too.'"[22]

"We can spare a man for that, too." This expression of Carlyle's suggests fairly well the spirit in which Sherman did his reviewing. The catholicity of taste which at a later stage in his career surprised many of his followers was a part of his nature. It enabled him to do justice to the broad popular effects of O. Henry as well as the reclusive refinements of Agnes Repplier; to praise the seductive charm of Anatole France, whom he recommended to all Philistines who abuse the name of Epicurus,[23] and at the same time to find an excuse for A. C. Benson, whose gospel he described as Paterian Epicureanism, subdued and tranquillized by the elimination of ideas, because the vogue of his platitudinous books indicated "a popular demand for professors of a refined, moral, religious if possible, simple, and emotional optimism";[24] to admire the restrained criticism of academic scholars and not to disdain that of Swinburne with its "twinned epithets charging pair after pair like sea-horses up the foamy crest of his billowy sentences."[25] This is not to say that he belonged, with a certain writer whom he anatomized, to the philanthropic order of critics who feed lions with gingerbread, shunning the brunt of battle and leaving the judgment unsatisfied. From that peril he was secure by

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[22]*Nation*, December 30, 1909.

[23]*Nation*, October 1, 1908.

[24]Review of A. C. Benson's *At Large*, *Nation*, November 26, 1908.

[25]*Nation*, October 20, 1909.

virtue of the acid in his make-up. But at this time his acerbity was directed only toward sentimentality in its extreme forms, toward the absurd, the ignorant, and the meretricious.

The distinction which is commonly made between reviewing and criticism may be a valid one, but it loses a great deal of its force when the reviewing is done by a critic. Sherman's first long signed article, on *The Autobiography of Josiah Flynt*, might be placed in either category. It is the description of a book which becomes a portraiture of character and shows in reflection the features of a literary movement in its relation to life. Flynt is presented as the Cervantes of romantic vagabondage and his book as by its matter-of-factness a purge for all fond romanticists, shedding an unrefracted light over a civilization that is going quietly, furtively to the dogs. But while Sherman commends the writer for the wholesome and manly declaration that he has discovered nothing precious for the spirit in the Beyond of the vagabond, he cannot help betraying a romantic yearning in his own breast left unsatisfied by a too realistic description of nature:

"He is singularly insensible to the beauty and terror of the natural world. For him, Lake Michigan is only a bathing place. He has not a word for its waves rushing in under the wind like a sea-surf, not a word for the black ships that smoke dimly across its veiled and shifting horizon, not a word of the long, dusty roads that wind over the rolling prairie into the sky. For him, there is no sunrise nor sunset, nor 'clear night of stars.' No birds carol to him from dewy hedge-rows, and no startled rabbit crosses his path. He hums no old French song, he dreams no dreams, he builds no castles in Spain. He lies in no fragrant twilit dingle teaching Armenian numerals to a gypsy lass. To him the forest is not a greenwood, but a hang-out for hoboes, and the highway not the path to *El Dorado*, but the beggar's market place."[26]

In May of this year came a telegram from the editor announcing that George Meredith had died and asking for an article immediately. Sherman was getting ready for a class. He rushed over to the university, wrote "George Meredith is dead" on the blackboard, and for once cut a lecture to write an essay. In

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[26] *Nation*, February 25, 1909.

a short time he produced the first of those brilliant pieces of literary analysis which gave notice that a critic of importance had arrived on the scene. It brought a letter from Henry Holt saying, "Such stuff as yours on Josiah Flynt and George Meredith in the *Nation* is too good to be lying around loose," and asking if he had enough to make a book.[27] By the editors of the *Nation* he was coming to be looked upon as their "finest and most ironical pen,"[28] and they were filled with concern when in the following year his stream of copy began to diminish. One reason for this diminution obviously was that the time had come to conserve his forces for the more significant things. He had also undertaken other tasks. He was at work with meticulous care in preparing for the Belles Lettres Series an edition of two of Ford's plays which he finished in 1910, though the publication was delayed till 1915; he had undertaken an article on Lord Chesterfield for Professor Paul Monroe's *Cyclopedia of Education*, an edition of *Coriolanus* for the Tudor Shakespeare, and a school edition of *Treasure Island* for Holt. News of this last brought a sorrowing protest from Paul Elmer More: "It pains me to the heart to see you caught in the toils of the schoolbook publishers. . . . Don't do it again."[29] Sherman was not really seriously caught. In view of the amount of temptation to which he was subjected, his sins of this kind were very few, and he appreciably lessened their heinousness by putting into them the most conscientious workmanship of which he was capable. To Stevenson he was paying a standing debt of gratitude.

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[27]August 24, 1909.

[28]Letter from P. E. More, July 12, 1909.

[29]April 1, 1910.

CHAPTER XI

ENGLAND

IN THE summer of 1909 the Shermans spent six weeks in Colorado, visiting the Woodbridges in Colorado Springs and camping with them in Buffalo Cañon at an altitude of some 8,000 feet. It was Sherman's first visit to the Rockies, and he wrote to Carl Van Doren a description of the beauties of the Colorado landscape calculated to lower the pride of an enthusiastic Mid-Westerner.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

1612 N. Tejon St.,
Colorado Springs, Col.,
July 12, 1909.

. . . After this trip it is going to be hard for both of us to speak respectfully of your country as country again! The plains of eastern Colorado are so much more spacious and magnificent. The mountains around us are so inspiriting. One can see so far here both up and down and off. Whereas in the Corn Belt one can see forty rods on a clear day, here one can see forty miles. But you will recognize that the situation has now changed. We are now the Westerners. You Corn Belters are in the effete East.

As yet the camp is *in nubibus*. "Nearer to," the problem of women and children looms larger. In most of the desirable places cows do not graze, and the heads of our households say nay to condensed milk. Meanwhile we take one-day tramps of 8 to 12 miles. There is infinite variety of the sublime and beautiful. It is likely that before long, however, we shall get into camp for a couple of weeks either with or without impedimenta. You had better plan to have your bag packed for short notice.

The air here is very clear, dry and bracing. You would find

your Homeric Studies proceeding *majoribus itineribus*. You might even recover your poetic birthright. There are many primroses here along sheer mountain gorges that would turn the heart of Peter Bell. The wild flowers are more original, more plentiful and more gorgeous than anything I have ever seen elsewhere.

We have a good bookstore also, in which I procured G. L.[owes] D.[ickinson]'s *Symposium*. The speech of the journalist on America is choice. But what most delights me is the soft, colloquial, Attic style. I think what we need to cultivate in our American school of classics is style. It would not hurt us for a time to run to a little excess in euphuism. Think of it.

Sherman delighted in the long tramps through the cañons and over the mountains, especially at points where strength and dexterity were in demand. In the descent of Queen's Cañon the creek, an unusually large one, plunges through a series of pot-holes or "devil's cauldrons," and the walls of the cañon rise so steeply from the stream that there is no room for a continuous trail. Sherman would stand waist deep in the creek, steadying the older members of the party as one by one they crossed on a slipping log, or swinging them across the deeper part of the pool when it was necessary for them to jump.

The camp in Buffalo Cañon, though less than a mile from a little station on the Cripple Creek Short Line, was out of sight and hearing of the railroad, being separated from it by a great boulder-strewn hill. There were many beautiful places within easy reach. St. Mary's Falls, the highest cascade in the region, was only half a mile above the camp, and it was a short but a very steep climb up over the falls to the little mountain park at the top, and thence to the summit of the unromantically named "Cookstove," a truncated cone of bare rock which commands one of the finest views in the region. Brief as this experience was, it made a permanent impression upon Sherman's imagination. In his diary he lists Buffalo Cañon among the places which have developed his "taste for the wild," and bits of imagery reminiscent of the Colorado landscape are scattered through his writing, such as the comparison of the reader's rejoicing in Mark Twain's Western stories with the way one rejoices in a pine tree on a red spur of the Rockies.

In the following summer he went with Carl Van Doren on a tour of England and Scotland. This was a trip that he had been looking forward to for many months with no little eagerness. Two letters to Van Doren, when there appeared to be a prospect of the plan failing, show the state of his expectancy.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

707 W. California St., Urbana, Ill.,
February 27, 1910.

DEAR BARD:

Your letter of recent date was about as stupid and evasive a piece of writing as one shall see on a summer day. From which I infer that your plans have shifted in some way, and that you hesitate to say so. The best thing in all such cases is to cleanse the stuffed bosom. There is assuredly no reason for reticence so far as I am concerned. If the projected dream seems impracticable, shatter it at a blow.—I should not be in the least disgruntled if I did not get across the water at all this summer.—The Lord knows there is enough to do at home. So for the love of the Holy Virgin and all the saints, the next time you write, *say something*, and don't beat about the bush like a flying machine modeled in 1800.

As for getting passage across whenever you please, everyone knows that is all nonsense. The slower lines are even more crowded than the fast and expensive ones. There are some twenty persons going from Urbana, and they have looked into the matter and bought their tickets long ago. You must not confuse a transatlantic steamer with a freight train plying leisurely through the cornfields between Chicago and Champaign.

So far as Oberammergau is concerned, who cares a rip of an old coat about Oberammergau? The only reason why my secretary mentioned Oberammergau was because so many persons do care for Oberammergau that those who don't have to step up lively if they want a ticket to anywhere else just as if they wanted to go to Oberammergau.—If I should get across, England and the British Isles for mine. If time and money hold, one could swing around, as you say, by Munich and get drunk,

or by Paris and see the Moulin Rouge just for a flourish; but that is not the main.

If you yourself have got to spend all your time in the Museum copying Mss. or in the country visiting peacocks, for the Lord's love say so, and no bones broken.—Only come out of that deep fuliginous mist in which you have enshrouded yourself. If you have lit up another match with man or maid, by the foot of Pharaoh, why this ghastly secrecy about it?—Your last letter, to speak it roundly, had all the Machiavellian sinuosity of a sea-serpent. As Hamlet remarked—"Quit your damnable faces and begin."

I congratulate you on passing your examinations; but I recommend you to give up the finals if they are going to affect so disastrously that naïveté and noble ingenuousness of disposition which was discernible, I am told, in your greenest youth, and which marked so distinctly your entrance upon the scholarly career.

If this does not evoke from you a candid curse, *Acheronta movebo.*

Yours,
S. P. S.

(*To The Same*)

707 W. California St.,
Urbana, Ill.,
March 3, 1910.

Dear Bard,

In your letter received to-day I seem to detect a note of grievance which it was very far from my intention to provoke. My offending letter was written at the end of a distressful month of illness on the part of my family topped off with a week of excruciating toothache on the part of myself, during which month there was a partial suspension of sleep and also the composition of a fairly long essay, on the conclusion of which I sat down in a mood of excessive jocularity and saluted you in heathen speech though with wholly Christian meaning.—As a mere matter of style, allow me, however, to say that your feeling for effects led you into an antithesis both false and hackneyed, when you scathingly suggested that between friends a needle hint is better than a bludgeon, with the implication that

I had employed the latter. I am not sure that I agree with the proposition anyway, between friends; but as a matter of fact what I used was not a bludgeon; it was a *pillow!* If you will take the trouble to re-examine my epistle in the sobering light of the comic spirit—the cold gray dawn of the morning after—you will readily discover that it was only a stage-bludgeon, stuffed with goose-feathers. If I had suspected the Scotch strain in your ancestry, nevertheless, I should never have resorted to histrionics—a sand bag and a pillow looking much alike on the outside. I should have had the town crier speak my words.

What was entirely serious in my letter was (1) the enquiry whether change in your plans of any sort would make our sentimental journey unfeasible or unadvisable, and (2) my statement that I had so much to do ahead that I should not in the least object to deferring the trip.

Emphasis, in this lethargic section of the country, it is from some points of view desirable to cultivate. From the point of view, in particular, of a person desiring to get anything done. All this year I have been giving "needle hints" to Gr[eenough] that he had better look into your case if he wanted to get you back here in the department. A few days ago I cornered him and told him that now was the appointed time to act if he wished to save the best man the department had ever had or would ever have the chance to lose. The next day he told me that he had written to you asking you to give "us" a chance to speak before you closed with the enemy. He had been as much alarmed as I, but the lethargy of the fat middle-western airs had numbed his nimbler senses. I trust you will give the matter solemn consideration. . . .

Yours faithfully,
S. P. S.

On this tour Sherman did the things that any lover of literature might do on paying his first visit to Britain. His senses were open for the romantic and the picturesque, for the "red glow of a midnight sun and the green-gold glitter of the young moon and stars in the enchanted seas off northern Ireland," for "the Keltic motions of the spirit hovering about Tighnabruaich, Glen Caledh Castle, Achnacarry, Loch Scavaig,

Clachnaharry, and the high cairn of Thomas the Rhymer at Inverness, the desolate beauties of Iona and Fingal's Cave, in which his pleasure was "somewhat mitigated by the reiterated ejaculations of a fat fellow countryman to his brood of hens: 'Very historical, very historical indeed.'"[1]

As he bicycled down the vale of Annandale he was ravished with the prospect: "A more sublime vale I never passed through. All this land is pastoral and very sparsely marked with habitations—small shepherds' cots. The bottom is a broad green sward. Higher on the sides, sheep folds of dark stone. Still higher, white, newly-shorn sheep grazing. The green hills round heavenward. As we sailed down through the dripping air we gazed upward to the right and the left and saw the processional pomp of the clouds moving northward and eastward along the hilltops, like a seraphic host veiled in the powder of a celestial conflict, and returning weary to the throne of God with trailing banners, faint but victorious. Near the bottom of the vale looking backward we seemed to be in a vast Arcadian realm, an undisturbed pastoral realm held by a handful of shepherds—infinite greenness, stillness, rain and mist—of an almost holy calm and solemnity. Here the native solitude of peace."[2]

He went to the churches, and in St. Mary's Chapel in Aberdeen he felt the power of the old poetry of religion heavy about the place and his "disgust for the impudent isms of the Nineteenth Century," which he had expressed in an unpublished essay on Pater, strengthening. "All one's acquaintance with histories of various religions," he reflected, "all myths and poems of old people should confirm, not weaken one's esteem for the forms of service and faith in which his own race has been cradled —in which its sense of awe and veneration has been preserved through the secular ages. The fragility of the human spirit—its dependence on the body—should make us wary of striking at the vessels of faith. However fantastic, however antiquated, they are not more strange, more uncouth—than these temples of the Holy Ghost which men clothe and adorn in Scotland for thirty-three shillings."[3]

It was not, however, before a shrine of the old religion, but

[1]Letter to H. F. Goddard, November 19, 1910.

[2]Journal, July 5, 1910.

[3]Journal, June 19, 1910.

standing in the Cathedral of St. Giles before St. Gaudens's bronze relief of Robert Louis Stevenson that Sherman underwent the most profound emotional experience of his summer's travel: "As I stood gazing at the invincible romancer writing his blithest and keenest on his death bed, the organ smote upon my ear with a storm of sound, recollection of Stevenson's troubled yet gay youth came upon me, his essay on Knox, a flood of vague suggestions of the fierce religious past of Scotland, the bold rough life of his sires, the beacon builders among the northern isles, the sick man lying on his couch, the tender thrill of the verses for children in the Garden, 'Bluidy Jack,' the voyages through the far Pacific, the exile doing for Scotland in his remote and solitary habitation, duelling still with death, what Scott in his unparalleled puissance had done at Abbotsford, the grave on the hill, the Road of the Loving Heart, the green and crawling envy of detractors, the triumph—'Home is the hunter, home from the hill'—and after all he came back to St. Giles to be viewed by travelers from many lands under the shadows of John Knox—all these things mingled with the reverberating music—and the tears rushed to my eyes so that I had to turn aside and walk abruptly away. I wandered on to the other end of the Cathedral, but at every few steps when the voice of the organ rose those lines sang through my brain again—'Under the wide and starry sky,' and I had to struggle with my tears —tears which have not been in my eyes a half dozen times in the last fifteen years.—I cannot say why—but this man's life and death affect me as intimately personal—I felt before his image an emotion as keen as if I had been stirring the memories of a lost brother or father. I remembered at the time the first occasion of my reading the account of his death in the second volume of Colvin's edition of the letters—and how I put the volume down, shaken through and through.—I feel now as never before the truth and beauty of that passage of De Quincey on the strange complexity of our emotions in moments of deepest significance."[4]

In London Sherman dutifully made the rounds of the customary sights. In the picture galleries he looked at portraits with the eye of the literary man for the expression of character.

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[4]Journal, June 28, 1910.

But his chief amusement was haunting the bookshops of Charing Cross Road and buying more than he could afford. After spending twenty shillings or two pounds a day for books he would salve his conscience by making a supper on sixpence. It was fortunate, he wrote to a friend, that he had his return ticket; otherwise he would be selling Swedish matches in the Strand. "Cornhill Road, London, W. C., let me inform you, is the primrose road to everlasting bankruptcy—unless you have previously steeled your heart to all the fragrant seductions of ancient calf and wormy folios.—I brought home some three hundred odd volumes of one sort and another."[5]

The stage of financial destitution in which these extravagances left him is set forth with fitting pathos in a letter from Glasgow to Van Doren, who had gone on to Germany.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

Glasgow, 19th August, 1910.

GEEHRTER HERR:

Let us now take up briefly the Romance of the Guinea. We thundered over the thin ice of penury into this city at 8:30 without breaking through.—Without mishaps, but not without adventure. In the compartment with me were two chaps of middle age—one of them returning to Glasgow with malaria and ague after two years in Calcutta. You should have seen the eager way his pale eyes devoured up the landscape; how he commented on his first robin after exile.—Well, they left the compartment, and I was for some time alone. Of a sudden, looking over the top of a volume of poems chiefly in the Scottish dialect which had been engaging my attention—I espied on the seat in front of me a small piece of gold—a half-sovereign—no less.—Dire is poverty; but virtue is stronger than death. Hastily picking it up, I rushed out into the corridor as if my life depended upon it and restored it to the ague-stricken Indian. He looked so miserable and seedy that I was on the point of offering him all that remained in my purse; but at that moment he poured into his palm ten golden sovereigns and I checked my impulse.

[5]Letter to H. F. Goddard, November 19, 1910.

The next discovery was that the snippy dirty little green milk ticket that I bought in Eastcheap was what we call in the Stites a "round trip ticket"! Death and perdition! When one asks for a ticket to Glasgow does it *necessarily* follow as implicit in the first requirement that one is asking also for a ticket from Glasgow to London? I find I can redeem or partly redeem this ½ inch stub; but must write to the superintendent and receive my reply too late to relieve the needy.

I reached this place, as I have intimated above, without spending a cent. But my spine had ossified; my head sang; my teeth chattered; and my heart flipflopped wanly in its stage. I staggered into the station; reeled past a refreshment booth. A sudden revulsion of feeling came over me. "To H——ll with expense!" I cried. "Hang Economy!" "Overboard with prudence." And suiting the action to the word I rushed in and bought a ham sandwich and a cup of coffee.

Then heavy with repletion I wandered indolently through the dark city, waving off boys with one hand, fending off cabbies with the other, while with the third and fourth I carried my suit case, stick, coat and Burns in search of Armstrongs. After no great time I found the hotel. The corridor was a-buzz with elderly girls chatting about the *California*. I approached the desk and "intimated" that I would like to be put up for the night. The "courteous" lady smiled wanly and intimated in her turn that that would be quite out of the question, as they were overflowing, and furthermore the whole city was full and she knew not where to recommend me. At past nine o'clock this seemed inhumane. I appealed to her sympathies; I told her that Armstrongs was my own particular hotel; that I invariably stopped there when in Glasgow, that I would sleep in anything —even if they had to turn one of the maids out.—She melted and found by wire an affiliated hotel four or five blocks away whither she sent me in charge of a boy—O heaven! Another sixpence. I would tell you the name of the hospice; but unhappily I neglected to notice as I came in. My page, however, informs me that it is in a very quiet quarter of the town; is little used except by bridal couples; but is very much used by them. I haven't been out in the hall yet, so have met none. But at breakfast I shall look for brides.

In some inexplicable way I seem to have fallen into the nar-

rative mood—which is unusual with me. What I set out to say is that I suppose you must have heaved a deep sigh of relief as my train moved out of Euston Station. And I am very sorry to have been so much trouble to you. There is this, however, to be said: Never marry a woman who will not cry to you, "O Captain, my Captain," —for you'll have a h——ll of a time otherwise.—With this enigmatical utterance I shall have to close; for my o'er-watched brains have ceased to work.—But you shall hear soon again.—

To-morrow I shall be
'Twixt the devil and the sea.
W. M.

Yours,
S. P. S.

After seeing the sights and raiding the bookshops Sherman still had some time left for reading and working on the introduction to his edition of *Treasure Island*. He was troubled by the fact that he was not a rapid writer. Reading in Boswell's *Tour of the Hebrides* the saying of Johnson that a man should first learn to write rapidly and then to write well, he was moved to set down the following entry in his journal: "I would give, say, five years of my life for the ability to sit down before a block of paper and begin at once—'leave your damnable faces and begin.' By the same token I am going to lay aside the book and write ten pages of stuff about R. L. S. to-night or die in the attempt."[6] The fate of all such resolves may be read in the entry that immediately follows: "Wrote a page and a half," or, even more strikingly, in one of several weeks later: "sat down and addressed myself to R. L. S.—In the course of the next eight hours, I had composed two pages."[7]

There are in this journal of his travels also a number of passages in which he gives us glimpses of the moral discipline to which he was subjecting himself, glimpses of a character in the process of formation. On the voyage over he reads Professor Babbitt's *New Laokoön* and notes that he seems himself nearly to have attained the results of the discipline there advocated,

[6]June 26, 1910.
[7]July 12, 1910.

"namely, to receive from external objects an impressionism unmodified by temperament, that is, a merely intellectual concept. Years ago, say eight or ten, subject to moods—as of a kind of vapor pervading the whole personality."[8] His thoughts run on a plan for a book to deal with "Effective Lives" "to turn attention to the victory of design and reason over temperament and inclination—men who have considered the superiority of a certain attitude in life, and by dint of tireless self-discipline have learned to take it."[9] He feels attracted to the "somewhat recondite and piquant charm" in the character of George Crabbe, as portrayed by his son, made up of "modesty, humor, pith, a touch of austerity, observation, and a great gift of silence."[10] That the attitude which he was thus cultivating carried with it a certain danger of unsociability, even priggishness, might be surmised from his impatience with the conversation of some of his fellow travellers, college professors though they were—a line of tittle and stories with nothing in it to whet his wits on.

But it was no simple matter for Sherman to train himself into a perfect disciple of Professor Babbitt. For one thing he betrays something that savors strongly of "sympathy" for the under dog, questioning whether the vigorous portion of society can afford to be complacent about the tragedies on which its own success is built.[11] In his admiration of calm and restraint there is at times a fire and enthusiasm which somehow oversteps the virtues that it celebrates. Thus, on an evening in London, he meditates on Books VII and VIII of "Paradise Lost": "In this city a great many of God's sons get much nearer to the dirt than behoves a man before his ultimate return to the dust.

> "'For God will deign
> To visit oft the dwellings of just men
> Delighted, and with frequent intercourse
> Thither will send his winged messengers
> On errands of supernal grace.'

[8] June 6, 1910.
[9] July 31, 1910.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] August 8, 1910.

When men can hear such music as this, how strange that they will go a——ing after Mason, and Wraxall, and John Philips.—Filled with envy and admiration of M. Arnold who early in life resolutely shut the door on rubbish and sat down with the wise and the great.

> "'If they list to try
> Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens
> Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
> His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
> Hereafter, when they come to model Heaven
> And calculate the stars.'

"I have vainly started in to quote the finest passages of this divine eighth book of 'Paradise Lost'—I must to satisfy my desire quote whole pages. Here is not the tumult and the splendor of the earlier books—but, ah, the luminous Sophoclean calm!—the grave and limpid utterance that this blind old warrior attained in his solitary age,—'all passion spent'—all secular strifes and fury over,

> "'taught to live,
> The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
> To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
> God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares
> And not molest us, unless we ourselves
> Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.
>
> "'But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
> Uncheck'd, and of her roving is no end;
> Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learn,
> That not to know at large of things remote
> From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
> That which before us lies in daily life,
> Is the prime wisdom; what is more is fume,
> Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
> And renders us in things that most concern
> Unpractic'd, unprepar'd, and still to seek.'"

Still more characteristic of Sherman's temperament is that consuming energy and hunger for work, that emphasis on doing

rather than being, which in the language of his masters might have to be called expansiveness, even if its object is intellectual:

"It is often exclaimed: How can such or such a man do so many different things! (e. g., Scott—Roosevelt). It would perhaps be more just to say, how can certain men do so few!! The secret of creative work is composition (*cum-ponere*). The effective man in this light is one who has a great many things in his mind at the same or nearly the same time; so that being contiguous or fresh in memory and easily recallable they tend to form affiliations and connections among one another.—Interfertilization of ideas impossible to those who narrowly limit their thought and activity.

"Then, too, there is much in getting up a big roaring fire in the mind; so that all its cavities and recesses are illuminated; and no faculty can shirk in the corner, and no material lie inert. Too many of us sit down in a small corner with a farthing dip —when we might equally well burn a thousand candles."[12]

On the return voyage Sherman composed a set of stanzas in which his mood of strenuous aspiration finds a voice—the pride of a spirit seeking consecration to something worthy of its powers, perhaps not altogether assured as to what that something is, but valuing the effort more than the object of the effort.

Composed at Sea

Nothing of thee, O God, I ask
  That others ask of thee,
Nor love nor lands nor pleasant task—
  All these are nought to me.

To me, O God, these things are nought;
  Yea, therefore do I cry—
I would not find, but would have sought
  Thy gifts before I die.

Before I die grant me, O God,
  Once something to desire.
Let this unfruitful barren rod
  Once burn, once flame with fire.

[12]August 7, 1910.

Grant me, O God, that I may think
  Thy game once worth the while,
Nor let me in thy waters sink
  Unstruggling with a smile.

. . . . . .

Mute I watch the waters glisten
  Till the long day dims and dulls
To the swashing waters listen
  And the crying of the gulls,

Neither pain nor pleasure feeling
  In the purple pallid sky,
Where the evening star is wheeling,
  And the great winds hurtle by.[13]

It is possible to see in these stanzas also a resurgence of the despairing mood expressed once in a letter to Woodbridge[14] and again in one of his journals,[15]—a prayer to be delivered from the apathy into which he feels he is sinking, caring for nothing yet wishing passionately to care. The process of adjusting himself to his destiny was no simple one for Sherman.

[13]August 22, 1910.
[14]See p. 160.
[15]See p. 161.

CHAPTER XII

SETTLING DOWN

IN THE fall of 1910 the Shermans moved into the house which they had purchased in the previous spring at 1016 Nevada Street, within a block of the university campus. In this house they lived as long as they stayed in Urbana, enlarging it somewhat in 1919, and its pleasant living room and book-lined study are indissolubly associated with them in the memories of Illinois teachers and students. Professor Greenough having resigned from the chairmanship of the department and returned to Harvard, Sherman was appointed to act in his stead for the year 1910–1911. The feeling on the part of the administration that he was still too young to be entrusted permanently with the care of so large a department probably had more to do with making this appointment temporary than the desire to conserve his energy for the exercise of his more distinguished talent. On the part of Sherman himself there was considerable reluctance to undertake the responsibility. His oversensitive conscience always put him into a panic of fear about his capacity for a kind of work he had never done, and he was, moreover, justifiably concerned about the effect of the additional duties on his leisure for writing.

In the year that he served as chairman he learned many things about the running of a large institution. More intimate contact with the president and the deans, more direct perception of the difficulties involved in reconciling one's desires with his means brought some sobering reflections. He could already with an early disillusionment ask a fellow executive to show him "how a model college looks all unspotted by the world in the mind of its maker."[1] To his friend Goddard he wrote: "Have you found that Headship tends toward Toryism and the acceptance of the ancient groove? Another year in the seat of Gr[eenough] and I should be a total loss to the Radical

[1]Letter to W. T. Foster, April 27, 1911.

Party."[2] There was a certain pleasure in the novelty of his duties and doubtless some satisfaction in his responsibility. He was interested and painstaking in the ordinary business of the department to such an extent that his margin of time for writing was all but wiped out. In his chief task, which was to find for permanent head a man whose qualifications would conform to the standard which the university was trying to establish for such positions, Sherman was strikingly successful. It was, however, no simple undertaking. In Professor R. M. Alden, of Leland Stanford, he secured for the university a man of wide culture and gracious personality, an accomplished and versatile scholar with a humane interest in literature and the art of writing, whose accession gave character and prestige to the department.

He also tried to persuade Van Doren to join the staff at Illinois, working, with a hint of parody that was quite permissible between friends, on the latter's professed attachment to his native State:

"Now is the chance to come out and help us make the college of L and A the best thing in the university, and the university the best in the world!

"Here you are in the great heart of the country. Here is the place to feel the pulse of *real* people beat. Here is the place to study and create real American literature! Please read over what Lowell and a younger poet whose name escapes me have said about the native clay of this section, and its adaptability to the formation of great men."[3] When Van Doren decided not to accept, he looked about for another man. But he insisted with great emphasis that no one would be considered for a permanent appointment unless his qualifications were *exceptional.*

When the time came for resigning his cares to Professor Alden, Sherman did it with a distinct feeling of relief. But his duties in the university continued to be quite heavy. The graduate work of the department was beginning to develop in a gratifying manner and the most ambitious students for advanced degrees were gravitating in his direction, taking up the topics in the field of Eighteenth Century romanticism with which he was teeming. He reports having read in one semester

[2]February 8, 1911.

[3]March 3, 1911.

something like twenty-four hundred pages of master's and doctor's theses.[4] He was also being utilized, as was inevitable, in various committees. He was placed on the executive faculty of the Graduate School and was chairman of a committee on the amalgamation of the College of Literature and Art with the College of Science.

One of the jobs assigned to him was that of setting forth the opportunities for graduate work offered by the university. The style of an official bulletin is necessarily sober, yet it is not hard to see how his imagination was stirred as he contemplated the substantial achievement and the promise for growth in the light of the very recent and meager beginnings of the institution. His language is proof of the way in which he felt "the inner throb and glow of the enterprise" and was becoming absorbed in the atmosphere of the place.

The university is described as having its origin "in a passion for improving all the pursuits and professions of life by the prompt utilization of the results of scientific investigation and liberal culture. Inspired by the idea that all the professions should become at their best learned professions, it steadily widened its range of instruction, strengthened its teaching staff, and multiplied its facilities for specialization. In less than half a century it has expanded from an almost local institution ministering to a handful of students mainly from Champaign County into one of the world powers in education, serving not merely America but lands as remote as India, China, and the Philippine Islands.

"Five thousand two hundred students, in the academic year 1911–12, were enrolled in its thirteen schools and colleges. Among them were representatives of forty-eight states and territories and twenty-eight foreign countries. On the faculty roll were 552 members, including graduates from a large number of the leading universities of Europe and America. Not the least of the advantages derived from the pursuit of graduate work in such a cosmopolitan community is a broadening of one's horizon and an enlargement of one's sympathies through personal contact with men and women of many lands and very diverse interests." Then, after speaking of the financial stability of the

[4]Letter to Homer Woodbridge, May 18, 1913.

university in general he refers to the specific provision by the legislature for the Graduate School, by which "the people of Illinois recorded their intention of supporting research and opening the highest professional education to all the people," and to the purpose of the Administration "to bring the Graduate School to the point where it shall offer instruction and equipment equal to that of any graduate school in the country."[5]

It was with a conception like this alive in his mind that Sherman read in the *Yale Review* for April, 1913, an article by Professor E. P. Morris on "The College and the Intellectual Life" in which the state university was very disparagingly handled, its claim to rivalry with the older Eastern institutions on the intellectual plane completely dismissed, and its function reduced to that of vocational training. In Sherman's words, it amicably divided the educational world, allowing the Western university to look after the body and the Eastern college to look after the soul. It was wounding to his self-respect and to his democratic convictions, and it stirred his bile by its patronizing security. He retorted with "Education by the People,"[6] indicating the ideal aims of the state universities and their pursuit of perfection in Matthew Arnold's sense: "They would dignify the entire range of human conduct by discovering for all the people and by making prevail from the lowest to the loftiest the right and the excellent form of every activity. They resent with justice the rather widely prevalent notion that the consecrated search for light is a monopoly in the possession of the old New England colleges. 'Even in our concern for the applied sciences,' they say, 'there operates the identical passion for perfection which you extol and strive to keep unspotted from the world. You have preserved your idealism in glass jars; we have not lost ours by putting it to work in the bread of life. Immersed in sense though we seem to be, we are Platonists no less than you, pursuing through the things that lie nearest to us the divine idea, and we shall pass in due time from the love of sensuous to the love of super-sensual beauty.'"

Professor Morris had said in so many words that the democratic ideal and the intellectual ideal were in conflict. It was not

[5] "Why Go to a Graduate School?" *University of Illinois Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 28, pp. 13–14.

[6] *Nation*, May 8, 1913.

possible to deny the force of some of the criticisms: the mistake of the critics was that they were in too great a hurry. "Because the mighty Mother has not wholly accomplished in the twinkling of an eye what has been hitherto the slow work of centuries, shall we charge her with imperfect vision, abandon our faith in her, declare her incapable of providing for her offspring?" At the question Sherman was kindled to fervid prophecy:

"It is absurd to assert that the united will and means of two or three millions of citizens cannot compete successfully with the sporadic generosity of two or three scores of private individuals. It is absurd to declare that a great commonwealth cannot afford at its university a liberal arts college of absolutely the first class, and in its high schools ample preparation for it. . . . It is equally absurd to declare that the support of the people cannot be organized except for material interests and self-regarding ends; in the humblest walks, as history blazons, it can be organized for the adoration of God and the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. And the very obligations that the State institutions are under at the present time to refrain from religious instruction should make it appear more imperatively their duty to bring, not some, but all, of their students into quickening relationship with at least the purely human traditions of beauty, wisdom, temperance, truth and justice."

The editor of the *Nation* received this article with raised eyebrows and could not make up his mind whether "the lift in the thing was from real conviction or in part from the intoxication of ink," even hinting that perhaps Sherman had his tongue in his cheek while writing certain of his resounding paragraphs, but as it was "thoroughly good journalism" he published it.[7] In the West it was acclaimed as likely to have the desired effect in leading people in the East to understand the ideals toward which the state universities were striving. Vachel Lindsay thought he might sing it some day "in echoing rhyme." The sincerity of Sherman's profession had in a way been put to the test on several occasions. He had not only declined a position on the *Evening Post* in 1909, but had refused invitations to teach at Dartmouth and Williams. A few months after the publication of this article, when Mr. Paul Elmer More

[7]Letter from P. E. More, May 8, 1913.

was getting ready to retire from the office, Sherman had the opportunity of declining the editorship of the *Nation*. The question of his "return from exile" was being continually raised by friends in the East, who also had a certain amount of coöperation within the domestic camp. To their importunities Sherman never outwardly made denial. He met their fears about his settling back and dry-rotting with well-feigned acquiescence and good-humored allusions to the apathy and inertia of his advancing years, though at no time was he working with clearer purpose or greater industry. The following letter to Mr. More has something in it of that mystification which Sherman used with such effect to convey a noncommittal attitude, but essentially it is truthful in its expression of a readiness to settle down.

(*To P. E. More*)

1016 Nevada St., Urbana, Illinois,
June 21, 1913.

My dear More:

Your invitation is terribly inviting. I, too, have a bosom stuffed with questions and confusions badly in need of ventilation. One large theme in particular is very ready for tracking. And Babbitt and you, I am sure, ought to retrim my lamp before I set out on another year's journey through the "darkling plain."

But somehow one falls into the way of housekeeping even in the desert in the slow track of the caravans. Urbana in the summer time is the fiend incarnadined, and we have grown weary of helter-skelter jaunts among New England relatives. Accordingly we are about to edify a small shack on a bluff of Lake Michigan, *on an estate of about two acres*, about ¾ of a mile from Portage Lake (Lake Onekama), about a day's sail north from Chicago. We begin to edify on July 1st, and in two weeks expect to be under cover. I shall remain here for two weeks longer, say till the 5th of July, and then take some boxes of books and move northward. About a dozen of my colleagues have bought lots in this primeval timber and eventually will build there. This summer we shall have only two neighbors within a couple of miles.

Mrs. Sherman regards this only as an "investment" and a very temporary lodge, and expects with the sanguine feminine temper to return permanently from "exile" in a year or two. I have never been of a forward-looking disposition, and as I lapse along into middle age feel with increasing force the injunction to improve the passing hour—at least to avoid with what means the gods have granted the more distressful physical discomforts. The great danger, I suppose, that Ovid was exposed to among the Goths was the danger of settling back and dry-rotting. There is no doubt considerable peril of this sort in these solitudes, but then, as they say of drowning, it is an "easy death," preceded by the gentle apathy of a premature old age.

This will explain why I am not expecting to go East this summer—a touch of the premature old age. I have known about this Michigan plan for some time, but have rather religiously concealed it from the "folks at home" from a vague suspicion that they would regard it as a decisive indication of settling-back.

I will take along your Crater Club address and perhaps send you an epistle from among my unvisited pine trees. And why don't you take a week off later in the summer and come over into Macedonia and see us?

Sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

Thoughts of settling down were being brought home to Sherman in these years from sundry quarters. His friends were reporting betrothals and marriages and births at an impressive rate, and while one might comment on these events with the humor that is traditional on such solemn occasions, one could not escape their implications. The engagement of Carl Van Doren and the birth of a son to Homer Woodbridge brought forth the following letters.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

1016 W. Nevada St., Urbana, Illinois,
December 9, 1911.

DEAR BARD:

"One more perfectly good man gone!" was the exclamation that sprang spontaneously to my lips on reading yours received

this morning. But as Hamlet says, "If it be not now, then 'tis to come—the readiness is all."

Having recovered from the first shock, I heartily congratulate you both. I think a poet and fictionist, however, might do better in communicating such news to a friend of my tastes than to refer to the "Not Impossible" as Miss B——. At an early time, let me try the euphony of the new combination.

I do not know, of course, how brief, how sudden this contract is. A moderate period of probation I commend as salutary discipline for a Ferdinand. The memories of log-carrying are not to be despised among the pleasures of life.

It was my first thought that as doctor, author, novelist, etc., you were about to begin an experiment in harmonizing youth and crabbed age. But I remember the moonlight on the Irish sea and the eternal youth of poets. 20—20—20—20

$$\frac{2/20 + 26}{23}$$

O happy quotient!

Which reminds me that there will be many a futile sigh in Babylon—many a whispered echo of the first line of my letter: see *ante*.

I shall the more regret the summer's occupations after this news. Of course I too had looked forward to protracted considerations of life under the prairie stars, yet as to pleasures which might be enjoyed any time these next ten or fifteen years. Now, the future is folded up as a scroll that is read, is vanished as a glass that has been drained—so far as all this is concerned.

Henceforth you will be a manuscript perused, rolled up, sealed, closed under glass, defended from all vulgar gaze by a remorseless custodian of Twenty! Gods! That Youth's sweet manuscript should close. Is not this a bitter thing that I who have held the ink-stand, commented on the commas, scrutinized the deleted proofs of your soul's most crabbed excogitations —that I should yield mine ancient censorship and prerogative to this mere Girl.

I have no manner of doubt that she is a radiant creature, but—I can row no longer in this *Mare Mortuum*. Let not these unreckoning creatures of twenty think they can build cottages without cutting down trees. Nature's shade and shelter is no more; no more the casual meetings of Shepherds upon the un-

confined hill. To-morrow, four walls and the straight-backed ancestral furniture. To-morrow the narrow domestic ledger and the recording angel.

With a man like ——, of course one feels differently. He writes with the sane felicity of a man of forty, exultant yet not abandoned.—"OUR best work"—O, God.

Yes, I have agreed to teach in the summer session, though somewhat, indeed much, against my better judgment. The reasons two: that the fee will about pay for the trip East which we should be likely to take anyway: that I feel the need of *spiritual refreshment*—which you may interpret as you choose. I shall probably not take my family to New York, but leave them in Williamstown. If you know of a good room with a good *library* that I could get for six weeks do not hesitate to let me hear of it. Do you expect to be away from the city all summer? If you are here, I may get a crack at you at the beginning or end of the vacation.

I have received your Peacock, transmitted, I suppose, by way of a studied slight, through Patterson. It is indeed a pretty book within and without. I have gone so far as to read it. I marvel much at what you have made of a matter far from rich. Before this I should have written you about it, but was crowded with other business and postponed it, till I could read it as business in connection with some study of the Shelley books. I agree with the most favorable reviewers as to the merit of style and the general quality of the biographical interest which you have excited. What particularly pleases, and a little surprises me is the cool objectivity of your treatment of the old gentleman—the dispassionate critical light which you shed upon him—I applaud also your comment on his value as a witness in the Shelley business, and wish you had made even more of that point.—By the way, I have Arthur Meredith's copy of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* with his signature—identified by the help of your book. Also another book with the inscription "To Mr. Meredith with love from Violet." Do you know who *Violet* was or is? I should add that Mrs. Sherman has also read your book and thinks as I do about it, only perhaps more so.

Well, this is a long letter. I suppose I have had an unconscious feeling that it was a valedictory. I expect no answer. That is, nothing properly to be considered as such. For the next two

or three years your pen will be engaged in writing little rose-pink notes of announcement and little tea-rose notes of acknowledgment. In five or ten years you may begin to descend a little to the conversible level of an old married man and an affable human being. *Auf wiedersehen.* Mrs. Sherman joins me in sending best wishes to you and Miss Bradford, and poor little John, who knows no better, does the same.

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

Urbana, Illinois, June 24, 1912.

DEAR STICK:

There lies on my desk as I write a small card announcing the birth to the ex-Bard of "Robert Latimer Bates." I have at the present time but the faintest of all possible intentions of acknowledging the birth of this infant, and for that reason it is a source of satisfaction to me that I do not know the address of its parents. All this leads up to the confession (admission) that your case is somewhat different. I have really intended throughout the past quarter to felicitate you sincerely on your fourth—or is it the fifth? The fact is there have been so many accessions to the race—such a frantic increase in the birth rate among my acquaintances that I have all but ceased to keep tally on my own nephews, nieces, etc., etc., etc. Is it a boy or girl—boy as I seem to recall. Well, bring him up in the fear of God and woman. That reminds me that Uncle Brainerd has a boy or girl—I forget which. Grandfather M.—has two, one a girl, the other escapes me. Persis has two or three, and so it goes. O yes, Pat wrote me a month or so ago that he expected another Irishman in a short time. I wrote to Pat a ten page letter on the first day of January after a silence of 4 years. In June or July Pat replied with the following exordium: "I hasten to reply to yours of Jan. 1." While we are dealing with the birth rate, it may be as well to add that I have in my waste-basket the announcement of the joining in the holy bonds of matrimony of my old classmate Mr. H. Hopkins, Jr.—together with—well, I have a vague impression that it was one

of the Sabin girls. Have I told you that H. S. V. Jones has a daughter, Anne, who recently swallowed a safety-pin which cost her father his summer vacation to recover from her wind pipe—or æsophagus? Besides all these—O yes, H. C. Goddard has another—baby not safety-pin—besides all these there are many more recent arrivals among our friends and neighbors and still more expected ere the harvest moon. Also, my former friend and ally Van Doren is to be married in the fall to a lady in Florida—I think you will also find some notes on the birth rate in the *Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and other Shakespearean plays.—Ben I hear is also to be married. I admit I had rather hoped he would form an alliance with our Celticist friend here. It would have been a good arrangement for them both. After 30, romantic self-intoxication seems rather inappropriate. Nor can I wholly approve of these international alliances; though, indeed, I had a very pretty and intelligent girl in my classes this year who was one-half Siamese.—Van Doren, by the way, is writing a novel, which from the side-lines, at any rate, is a d—— sight more interesting than getting married. Wonder what H. Smith is doing. After the age of 30, I find there is very little left for a man to seek but pudding or praise. So far as my friends are concerned, I hope the search will be for the last weakness of noble minds. I know not how it is with you, but for myself I am oppressed well nigh to extinction by the beastly burgesshood developed in myself and my coevals by the fur-footed lapse of half a dozen years. When I turned 30, I began rapidly to settle. To-day I tip the beam at 198 lbs. and care less for Shelley than ever before in my life. I have abandoned most of my old illusions, and have found no new attachments save for late rising. I am too lazy to write to my friends; they are too lazy to write to me. I take that back. I now read the newspapers very piously, and latterly both morning and night. What is your section of the country going to do about this third party? Will neighbor Haines vote for T. R? If so, on what grounds? I should like to see Mrs. Todger's idea of a wooden leg.

Well, enough for this time of this midsummer drivel. Next Monday my devoted family and I turn eastward by the Penn. We stop over a day in Philadelphia to visit friends, then Mrs. S. and John visit somewhere by Hudson's River and so up into

New England. I go to N. York—partly to offer two courses in the Columbia summer session, partly as I understand to contribute paragraphs to the *Post*. Ruth and John contemplate also a week's camping with the Deacon and his wife. Very enjoyable indeed, I am sure. If you should happen to reply to me this summer, address me at Livingston Hall, Columbia Univ. till the 16th of August; after which write me anywhere in New England. Please write, for the love of God, if not for my sake.—

John is a fine strong (dis)obedient boy. Ruth is a fairly successful raiser of lettuces and early beets. No other news this time. Love to Belle and the children.

Very truly yours
B. J.

Teaching in Columbia in the summer session of 1912 was evidently an agreeable experience. Sherman enjoyed the stimulus of the city, though again one would probably be deceived as to his exact feeling by such a gloating letter as he addresses to his friend in the country.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

608 Livingston, July 12, 1912.

DEAR AUTHOR:

It is time to say that I pity you poor Western folk stewing along in your prairies. *Dulce est*, says Lucretius—I have not my copy at hand—but the sense is that it is pleasant to sit on a seashore and watch a wreck; pleasant to lie on a hill side and hear the battle afar off; but pleasantest of all to sit in a window six stories up in the center of the Nation's Capital and contemplate the obscure lot of those who rust out their days in some obscure provincial nest of the Middle Western wilderness.

Here the busy hum of life buzzes on. What though in the welter and the press, God's vassals drop and die? It is good to fall in such company. Round me the intellectual life of the country is circulating. Here is where the men-who-count are engaged; men, I say, like our German traveler, our French equivocator—and other great educators.

More plainly speaking, it is not half bad in the Columbia

summer session. Half the men seem to regard themselves as on a festival picnic. I myself do a fair day's work for a tolerably fair day's wages. But what then? The classes are largely made up of old instructors thoroughly "finished" at Teachers College and elsewhere. Your quarters at Hamilton are airy and cheerful. I have a nice poet for an assistant.[8] Ristine has shown me where Unter die Linden lies. All the English men are good fellows. By the way, I told Lawrence and Tupper about your novel this noon. I'm afraid L. didn't think it was quite the occupation for a scholar, but Tupper who was recently married seemed to like the idea from an economic point of view. Lawrence sails for Glasgow to-morrow.

My family are now encamped on Greylock, pestered by wood insects, but happy. John has just discovered his first snake and with some help killed it. Margaret, you will be glad to know, is flourishing. They all seem somewhat remote, but such is the lot of the husbands of the "leisured class" in America. See further M. Carey Thomas. Mrs. Krapp is the only exception in town that has come to my notice. How does the fair Floridian stand on the summer question? Better treat of this matter before signing the contract.

Well, the candles burn to bedwards, and tepid zephyrs whisper sleep. Let me hear of the progress of *The Devil's Lane* —bully title. If, by the way, you should want an asylum from company, the key of 1016 is next door at the Hays's. Good hunting!

Farewell,
S. P. S.

P. S. In the haste of departure with family and miscellaneous baggage, I fear no one of us expressed with adequate elegance our appreciation of your send-off. The act, sir, of a gentleman— of a Southern gentleman.

S. P. S.

Renewing on this occasion his direct contact with the *Evening Post* and *Nation*, he contributed along with notes and reviews a number of striking editorials. In two of them, "Per-

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[8]George F. Whicher.

sonality in Professors"[9] and "Professing Literature,"[10] he made an eloquent statement of his conviction that character and enthusiasm in the college teacher of literature were of greater value than learning, declaring, with a fling at his dearest enemy, that the true teacher "does not meet his student always with a philological journal in his hands, but sometimes with a fine idea in his head."

In the following fall we see Sherman at grips with one of the puzzling problems arising from a recent occurrence and meeting it with decision.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

1016 W. Nevada St.,
Urbana, Illinois,
October 5, 1912.

DEAR CARL:

I have debated a long while with myself and m'wife as to how best to eternize ourself cheaply and yet decently in your household. I have thought of the following memorials which would perhaps make an impression on the heart of your recording angel:

1. A Celtic Lexicon.
2. A carpet sweeper.
3. A pair of garnet earrings.
4. *Causeries de Lundi.*
5. A sterling silver can opener.
6. 1000 Melachrinos.
7. Six cans of Gloucester codfish.
8. Works of Charlotte Brontë.
9. Plaster of Paris bust of ——.
10. Alabaster hair-receiver set in chalcedony.
11. Enlarged photograph of —— —— with hand-painted complexion.
12. Works of Alfred Austin in full crushed morocco, hand-tooled, gilt-edges.

But I have rejected all these as too sentimental, and have ordered this evening sent to you from London—I mean to the

[9] *Evening Post*, July 6; *Nation*, July 18, 1912.

[10] *Evening Post*, September 30; *Nation*, October 3, 1912.

recording angel—a sepia platinotype 20 x 20 of Whistler's *Carlyle* that we saw in Glasgow. This is a pretty piece of reproduction, for I have seen it; but it will come to you unframed. When you receive it, you will hand it to the Angel, and she will take it to some shop and pick out a suitable frame, not to cost a cent less than five nor more than ten dollars—may as well be frank about these brutal matters. You will then send the bill to me, and the transaction will be closed.

Love to all—in spite of your blasphemous note and your still more blasphemous silence.

S. P. S.

P. S. Did you get your damn keys?

Another letter is chiefly of interest as admitting us to a view of some of the reading on which he was at this time engaged.

(*To Homer Woodbridge*)

1016 W. Nevada St.,
Urbana, Illinois,
December 29, 1912.

Dear Stick:

You have done remarkably well with an unusually bad subject—I mean in managing to bring yourself to write to such an old delinquent as I am. The pictures of your two daughters are jolly—though deceptive: without the lines on the back, one might have taken Margaret for the older. Mighty fine girls both, and M. looks like a rogue, which should be the look of all children for their first five years. I should be glad to see the look of Dana. The picture of John which Ruth sent you is in a high degree fantastic. It makes him out a worn hot-house lily, whereas he is a well-colored and stalky weed. And the pose gives him the air of romantico-sentimental vacancy—a broken-hearted infant of Shallot (?) abandoned by his lady-love; whereas his predominant traits are keen curiosity, humor—a day rarely passes without his making a pun and holding his sides with laughter—a large appetite for roast beef, pleasure in every kind of narrative from the Iliad to the *Bunnikin Bunnies*, and an inexhaustible interest in railroading.

To return to this matter of writing letters. I responded at once to the request for calendar matter for Charlie. On one sheet I promised to write to him before January 1st. Three days later, I think, we heard from Brainerd that he was dead. Brainerd prodded me to write months ago, and I intended to of course, but never got around to it. On the other sheet I wrote a lot of quotations from Bacon on the uselessness of married men in great enterprises and the relations of friendship.—While I was copying this stuff out Ruth pointed out that *you* are an exception. I hope you may continue to be. I have no justification to offer, and no philosophy with which to console myself. The only thing approaching even an explanation that I can think of is that when I was young I wrote very few letters. But when I wrote I spent a great while on each one, always thinking it necessary to communicate a great deal of "soul" in a friendly epistle. So that I never learned the art of tossing off a half dozen notes in half an hour. And when I grew older and had a good deal of other writing to do, I always was postponing the letters till some half-day of genial leisure in which I should have nothing to do.

Well, I have now learned that half-days with nothing to do will never come again. Those half-days belong to early childhood. And I have dim hopes that in the course of time I may be able to form the habit of writing a note or two at a set time every day, till I have patched up the broken threads.

At this moment I am tempted to lay aside the letter and hunt for your Pisistratus letter in the jumble of my back numbers of the *Nation*. But that would prevent my writing the next letter proposed for this P. M.—I did not recognize your hand in that matter, but I will look it up soon. I endeavor to trace you in the fiction notices, and occasionally think I get a glimpse of your "Far-Western" humor! You may be pleased to hear that one man wrote in to More, damning me some time ago as a "Middle-Western ethicist." You were correct in conjecturing that the Mark Twain was mine. It is really a great work—that biography; you can live in it, sleep in it, dine in it, travel in it, smoke in it, dream in it, and wholly forget that you are only a damn professor after all.—My latest in this week's number is a very "academic" discussion of Synge.

My greatest discovery of this fall—you know Ruth has frequently commented on my proclivity for discovering Thackeray, Milton, and other unknown people—is the *Journal* of the Goncourts in 9 volumes, of which I have read three this last week. You must really look into it. It lets you into the heart (and, I may add, the entrails) of French letters from 1850–1895. You will probably be able to track me in the *Nation* for the next six months, by the tags and letters of the *Journal* which I shall refer to about once a week. I don't know anything in literature to compare with it in its kind. In certain respects it puts it all over Boswell; though of course it is not properly to be compared with Boswell. It will be on my five foot shelf, if I have to add another foot.

I am also singing the praises this [year?] of Suetonius' *Lives* of the 12 Cæsars. For we are cultivating the classics—in translation and in the original, having read besides the above, a volume of Cicero in English (Bohn) *Divination*, etc.; the gospel of John in the Greek, and the first three books of the Odyssey in Greek, besides sundry plays in translation. There is a Greek club going here among the faculty, which is reading Euripides; but I have conducted our classical revival in the family circle with only occasional visitors. Haines, by the way, would enjoy the Bohn Suetonius.

Have you seen Babbitt's new book on French criticism? It is out, but I haven't got hold of it yet. More is about to publish his 8th of the Shelburne essays. That man is a perfect genius of serene and unruffled labor. He completely realizes the Goethean notion of an activity as unresting yet as free from restlessness as the motion of the stars in their courses. And he grows on you by his very aloofness and cool serenity. When you reach my age, hem, you will prize this freedom from fever in strenuous activity. The man's mind is really where the old Milton's was, and the mind of Sophocles, and Aurelius, and Sir Thomas Browne.

Well, to be perfectly square with you, you never had the need of models of serenity. For you were born of the tribe of Montaigne, or at any rate achieved its membership. But it must be confessed that this smiling skepticism is quite another thing from the tranquillity of the Stoic. At the present time I am all, or almost all, for the Stoics. Perhaps the best would be

a stoic interior with a smoking jacket of epicureanism *à la Montaigne*.

Perhaps our ideal is best practiced in Japan. We have this year a graduate student by the name of Ippei Kiyohara who is studying Western culture and electrical engineering, and is living in our house, where he serves the meals and sweeps the rooms. He is a Buddhist with an entirely open mind, eager for all our ideas. He was bred in the ideas of Bushido, which is a very austere and noble stoicism (of course with certain Oriental harshnesses); but he has the constant gayety and courtesy of a man who studies nothing else than the art of pleasing. With his assistance, I am learning a little Japanese, which is even sweeter than Greek.

Well, I am come to the end of my page and have only time to wish you all a happy New Year—on Oriental or Occidental basis as best suits your fancy. Our love to Belle and Ben and the children and the French Annex!

Yours,
S. P. S.

This is, you see, an essay in letting the pen gad freely following its nose.

Sherman's occupation with the ancient classics is deserving of some additional comment. His approach to them was far from erudite. In the opinion of Mr. More, whose familiarity with them was immensely wider and deeper, Sherman would have benefited by applying himself more intensely to their study, but be that as it may, his loyalty to their great writers was steadfast and his appreciation of their poetic beauties worthy of a lover of literature. With the Latins he was at home in the original, for the Greeks he relied almost wholly on translations. He read them with no antiquarian's interest but for the passages of poignant feeling, the philosophical bits, the wisdom of life, the *sagesse*. Sophocles, Virgil, Marcus Aurelius were those with whom he dwelt most affectionately. To the imperial stoic he dedicated a very special shrine among the divine masters of his spirit. A passage from the *Meditations* was a common morning prescription for giving a tone to the day. His manner of appro-

priating the ancients as chance led him into their presence is illustrated by a passage in the Journals recording his "discovery" of Suetonius:

October 16, 1912.

Read last night the lives of Julius and Augustus Cæsar in Suetonius. That of Augustus anticipates Boswell in its minute particularity with regard to phrases, spelling, methods of composition, speaking, letter writing, dress, diseases, diet, voice, features, morals, weaknesses, opinions of the subject. Delightful to hear these phrases—"I remember my grandfather's saying"—"I recall when I was a boy," etc. Air of complete candor in all matters with which he was acquainted.—In certain of the other lives, at the mercy of prejudiced traditions.

How can any student of English literature know what was taking place in the Renaissance or how or why it took place without constantly recurring to the classics, and keeping them fresh in his mind? These are the books that brought England out from the Middle Ages, that taught the English minds to care for reality, that taught English prose to lay off its barbarous ornament. The Renaissance is in a sense a movement of purgation—catharsis to expel the crudities of Mediævalism from its system.

Modern art still owes incalculable charms to the afterglows and glamours of that long plunge of the mediæval mind into the mythopoeic age—to the contacts at various points with savage Celts, barbarous Germanic tribes, Danish primitives, etc., etc. But what a hopeless task to assimilate all that barbarism.

I am discreditably ignorant of modern works on Roman history, and do not even know Gibbon. What do writers say on the corruption of taste, morals, and reason in Rome in relation to the Roman effort to assimilate Gaul, Egypt, Assyria, and the rotten Orient?—Look this up.

The one blot on the "chastity" of J. Cæsar, says Suetonius, was his association with Nicomedes—fruit of an undue tarrying in Bithynia.—Antony gets corrupted in Egypt. What did the Romans learn in Spain—? (Mem. the report of the Sergeant on the *Maine* of his escapades in Central America and Spain. Cf. the contemp. literature of the Pierre Loti type—how it continues to corrupt the world.)

Is not this process going on still in this migratory world? Should it be resisted? If so, how far is it possible?

Sherman's attention to the classics had its literary fruits in these years in an exquisite appreciation of Thomas Campion.[11] His relish for the graces of Latin verse is conveyed in a note to Professor A. S. Pease acknowledging an apt parallel from Virgil's "Georgics" (II, 323–324) to some of Campion's lines. "The iterated *ver*," he says, "does indeed suggest Campion—or *vice versa*—but there is nothing in Virgil so pretty as these lines:

> "'*Ver anni Lunæque fuit: pars verna diei;*
> *Verque erat aetatis dulce, Sybilla, tuae.*
> *Carpentem vernos niveo te pollice flores*
> *Ut vidi, dixi, tu dea Veris eris.*
> *Et vocalis, eris, blanditaque reddidit Eccho;*
> *Allusit votis mimica nympha meis.*' etc."[12]

In the following year he delivered an address on "English and the Latin Question" in which he traced the delicate filaments that connect our literature with that of antiquity, supplying some very valuable ammunition to the teachers of Latin in their desperate defensive. Some of his reviews in the *Nation* borrow the warm glow of their humanism from the same source, none more so than those in which he attacks the writers of "the younger generation" for their ignorance of the past—"that profound past to whose ideas and institutions the young men are devoting but fugitive glances from the dizzy rear of that Express-train that is speeding them out of it," and reads them a lesson out of the Greek Anthology and Cicero's "De Natura Deorum" and Epictetus.[13] He does not probe the weakness, however, without expressing his sense of what positive virtue he finds in this generation, as it appears, for example, in such a spokesman as Randolph Bourne—"a little deficient in gayety of heart, unduly confident in the strength of its insight, and amazingly disrespectful of its predecessors. In compensation it is fearless, honest, and terribly serious. Its vision—to tell

[11] *Nation*, August 25, 1910.

[12] April 8, 1910.

[13] "Young America," *Nation*, January 18, 1912.

the truth, we think its vision will improve with age. (We of 'the generation which is fast passing away' do not so much envy your possession of that.) Its fine heat and passion, its sense of dedication—that is its sacred gift, which the cynic life will gamble for; something should come of that."[14]

[14] *Nation*, May 29, 1913.

CHAPTER XIII

UNDER THE EYE OF MR. MORE

IN FOLLOWING the track of Sherman's writing chronologically one can never lose sight of the dominance in it of a note of faith in the energetic, life-giving powers, of a persistent sympathy with the creative forces which lead to joyous realization. This is the note of his early and enduring enthusiasm for Stevenson; it is the note on which he brings to a close an unpublished essay on Walter Pater, in whom he found a gospel "in accord with an harmonious relation of mind and body, and with a joyous sense of the fullness of life." In his first important piece of criticism he had stated the problems of contemporary literature in balanced terms which still gave at least as much importance to the active forces as to the restrictive. "How to give pleasure without corrupting the heart, and how to give wisdom without chilling it. How to bring into play the great passions of men without unchaining the beast. How to believe in Darwin and the dignity of man. How to believe in the nerves without paralyzing the nerve of action. How to recognize the weakness of man and not forget his heroism. How to see his acts and believe in his intentions. How to renounce his superstitions and retain his faith. How to rebuke without despising him. How to reform society without rebelling against it. How to laugh at its follies without contempt. How to believe that pain is invincible and joy is invincible, too. How to believe that evil is fleeing forever before good, but will never be overtaken and slain. How to look back upon a thousand defeats, and yet cling to the fighting hope."[1]

The quality of this enthusiasm was bound to undergo some modification when it came in direct contact with the cool, chastening intellect of Mr. More. Sherman admired in the

[1] "George Meredith," *Nation*, June 3, 1909; *On Contemporary Literature*, p. 264, where the phrasing is revised without any change in the significance of the passage.

latter a critic of wide learning, definite philosophical vision, secure judgment, and imperturbable temper, and an editor who inspired his contributors to say the best that was in them. He expressed the feeling that in having him for an audience, one had enough, and that if one had his approval one needed no other. The desire to please was all the greater because of the freedom from editorial pressure. Mr. More exacted no conformity of opinion from his writers. Once they had gained his confidence sufficiently to be enlisted among his regular contributors, they were at liberty to utter their individual views. An editor of this type exerts his influence by virtue of his intellectual force alone, and there is no doubt that Sherman's thinking on literary and social questions was for a number of years deeply colored by his sincere respect for the character and point of view of Mr. More. But as he could not deliberately accommodate his views and temperament to another's in all important respects, there appears in his utterances of these years a tendency to wavering and inconsistency for which his editor was quick to chide him.

Probably the only essay of Sherman's which Mr. More ever rejected was one on "Rousseau and the Return to Nature." This was by way of being a defense of Rousseau against those critics, American and French, who represent his teaching as an attack on civilization and organized society. Sherman argued that Rousseau's aim was a social system in conformity with nature as it was conceived by his individual reason, that his gospel of the state called for "rational legislation in levelling artificial and hereditary inequalities of rank and power . . . the reduction of anarchy and crime by the substitution in organized society of light and reason for routine force," and "the triumph in the individual of a spirit of obedience to self-imposed law over blind instinct." He further maintained that the reason for Rousseau's tremendous influence was that in advocating a "return to nature" he was in accord with the master spirit of his own time and of our time, and that the only effective way to criticize him was to show that he did not accomplish what he set out to perform, this being the line followed by Burke, Johnson, and Reynolds.

Ostensibly this article was written in the interest of critical fairness to the ideas of Rousseau. Actually one cannot fail to

observe in it a certain sympathy with these ideas, with the democratic aspirations and the passion for social reform. The coöperation of Rousseau with the temper of his age is also, in Sherman's view, evidence of some positive virtue. To Mr. More the ideas in the essay did not seem sufficiently clarified by reflection, and he courteously asked Sherman to reconsider the matter. Sherman replied as follows:

(*To P. E. More*)

Urbana, Illinois, Feb. 14, 1912.

My dear More,

The truculent jest with which you preface your rejection of my article rests upon a common confusion of ideas. You suggest that my manuscript, on reaching Urbana, returned to nature. On the contrary, sir, it returned to reason!

Heine has a poem somewhere in which he says that a lady-love who bids him good-bye and farewell forever in a letter twelve pages long does not really mean what she is saying. It is not in twelve pages that a disillusioned lady gives the *coup de grâce*. You, who are accustomed, like Richard III, to dispose of heads in two lines before you dine, seem to acknowledge a certain toughness or knottiness in the object of your axe in hacking so long at my prostrate trunk.

I take that back. Two motives determined the length of your reply. One merely humanitarian—to let me down easily. The other—a feeling that I had wandered into a very deep labyrinth of error from which I ought even at considerable pains to be extricated.

As the mail-carrier brought your letter to the door I happened to be reading what that eminent illustration of temperamental "Rousseauism," G. Moore, says of Arthur Symons' attitude toward editors. Whenever a manuscript was returned to Symons, says mine author, he was firmly persuaded that the editor was an idiot. I mention the fact to mark my difference from the Rousseauists. I have no such feelings about editors. I believe them all to be inscrutably wise like Providence.

All this is by way of reply to your aspersion of Urbana.

I was not quite certain whether your letter was intended as a justification of Gummere's article or as a quite independent

criticism of mine. If the latter, then I think there is very little fundamental disagreement between us—however poorly I set forth my own ideas on the subject in question, and even though at one point you seem to declare that I have abdicated common sense. But if your letter was intended to justify Gummere, I am bound to say that I do not think you have met my objections. I intentionally narrowed the discussion in the first half of the paper to controverting one specific proposition of Gummere's to the effect that Rousseauism means that "man will be good again if he be set free from communal bonds." I ask flatly where Rousseau teaches that, and I fail to see that you have answered the question. I show that he insists progressively upon the opposite of that theory in his important political treatises—in the *Arts and Sciences*, the *Inequality*, the *Social Contract*, the *Government of Poland*, and in the *Letter to M. Beaumont*. And I cannot see that you have invalidated that evidence. It seems to me that this is a perfectly definite question, not involved with any theories concerning the infra-and-supra-rational intuition, and capable of a perfectly definite answer. I regard Professor Gummere's utterance on this point as a "vulgar error." I hear it every day from people who have never read a page of Rousseau. And I should like to know whether it can be entertained by those who are really acquainted with his works. You are to understand that I ask this question because I cannot see that you have committed yourself on this particular point.

In the second part of my article, still intending to restrict myself to Rousseau's specific *political* doctrines, I argue that the return to nature which he advocates in political institutions is practically identical with a return to reason. I then contend that this "reason" was ably criticized by the Englishmen as inadequate to grasp the laws of nature. I further add that it is too little "instinctive," according to their view; and this statement could be justified by a dozen passages in Burke. And finally, I say that Burke believes there is a wisdom recognizable in the processes of nature which produces social and political institutions superior to anything that pure intellect can contrive. Rousseau, he maintains, and other rationalists, French and English, lack insight into this wisdom of nature which is above reason. Their projects are unsound because they are

contrary to nature. They oppose the something not ourselves which makes for righteousness. How is this "something not ourselves" perceived? Burke says by "instinct." Intellect is there as a unifying center of his wisdom but it does not exclude the more or less unconscious "life" of which it is a part; which penetrates it; and which it is ever seeking to penetrate more deeply. Rousseau's reason in his political discourses, which alone Burke considers, *does* exclude the circumambient "life"; it is therefore abstract, unnatural. The opposition here, I maintain, is not between the instinct which is below the reason and the instinct (or if you please the "insight") that is above the reason. It is simply between abstract *reason* and the instinct which is above the reason.

It is precisely at that point, as it appears to my most careful consideration, that your letter confuses the issue by broadening the question. You drop the specific inquiry concerning the opposition between the political philosophy of Burke and that of Rousseau, and substitute a general comparison of the total significance of the two men. I cannot help feeling, in short, that you fall into the trap—part way into the trap, which I tried to uncover and keep clear of. I mean you have poured Rousseau's ideas and his emotions all into one melting pot. To my notion, the opposition between them is fundamental. The relation between them is somewhat analogous to that between the oyster and its shell. Inside all is pulpy, mobile, expansive. Outside, all is hard, fixed, and impenetrable. It is peculiar that a thing so hard should come out of a thing so soft—that, as I said before, a man should have projected a rigid political system that would have been intolerable to his own temperament.

The question is whether Rousseau does return to his own temperament (which we admit was unique) in his political theorizing. My position is that he does not; that he rather turns against it in behalf of that abstract type of reasoning in which he was not unique. In a criticism of this abstract reasoning I am sure that Johnson's idea of "experience," Burke's idea of "instinct," and Reynolds' idea of "habitual reason" are all pertinent. Nor am I entirely persuaded that Bergson's figurative description of the place of pure intellect had not the slight illustrative value which I attached to it; but

I don't stand upon this, and I doubtless made a mistake in including an author from whose writings—legitimately or not—such inferences can be drawn as that of Sorel.

The point is that with my views of the purely rationalistic character of Rousseau's *political theory* I did not consider it in any way necessary to enter upon a discussion of the difference between the "infra-rational intuition" and the intuition that is above the reason. If I had been discussing Rousseau's total significance, if I had been discussing the *Rêveries*, the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, the *Émile*, the *Confessions*, the case would have been very different. The emotional, the temperamental, the instinctive Rousseau cannot be avoided there. If they had been my theme, I should hasten to agree with you that "to imply that Burke and Reynolds stood for instinct and that Rousseau stood for reason is to abdicate common sense." There we are in the presence of that emotional expansiveness, indefinite and dangerous, and essentially antagonistic to both law and reason. But this is the side of Rousseau that Gummere represented. This is the side from which, as I said myself, probably far the greatest number of "Rousseauists" have issued. But was not there another side?—Rousseau the abstract reasoner who said a multitude of semi-nefarious things about democracy and the liberty of the law? And did not Professor Gummere, and do not many others who ought to know better, absolutely misrepresent what he said?

I am not a "Rousseauist" of either side. I believe that his emotional and his rationalistic tendencies both need to be criticized and opposed constantly to-day. But it does seem to me in the interest of sound criticism that professors who write on these things should distinguish between what he *advocated* and what he *confessed*.

All this merely by way of appendix to my former article, which I really did not see how you could print, and which I should have directed as a personal letter to you if it had not been so long. I don't wish to engage you in a controversy so complex as this might easily become, but I should be glad to know whether I have in these four pages done anything to clear me of the terrible imputation laid upon my common sense.

Very truly yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

To this Mr. More reassuringly replied, "Really, you know, I regard you as a fairly sound member of society, only a bit young, and sometimes a trifle alarming to one of my bald habit of mind."[2]

Alluding to the altercation again a few weeks later Sherman indulges in some banter in which one may excusably catch a faint suggestion of sober truth.

"In Paradise," he writes, "I am sure that what seems to mortal eyes my heterodoxy is seen as orthodoxy on a more subtle ground. And yet at times I cannot help considering what a seductive, impressionistic, temperamental pen is lost to some non-existent 'progressive' journal believing in Socialism, Anarchism, Egoism, Cosmopolitanism, and Neo-Romanticism—lost by my early conversion to Orthodoxy, by my membership in the academic order, and by my adherence to your Episcopalian journal!—not to speak of my hostages to fortune and landholding."[3]

A dispute originating in a conversation that summer in New York about the ethical quality of Elizabethan drama, as reflected in Middleton's play of *The Changeling*, gave rise to the following letter.

(*To P. E. More*)

1016 W. Nevada St., Urbana, Illinois,
October 20, 1912.

My dear More,

I see with dismay that your errors about Beatrice have lain here unconfuted these three weeks. Having just gone through the play again with your notes, I find myself disagreeing as before with your view that the woman shows "no law of cause and effect in her conduct," and that her emotions are unrelated. I even go so far as to suspect you of the crime of identifying her moral sense, such as it is, with that of the author. And I charge you with "deliberately and malignantly" coloring the evidence to bring out the substantial incoherence of the damsel's character.

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[2]March 8, 1912.

[3]Letter to P. E. More, February 28, 1912.

For an example of this *coloring*, you say her love is "depicted as a holy thing," and you refer to II, ii:

> "I have within mine eye all my desires:
> Requests that holy prayers ascend Heaven for . . .
> Come not more sweet to our necessities
> Than thou unto my wishes."

I can see nothing in this but a bit of natural rhetorical extravagance—"God himself couldn't give me anything I want more than you." Anyone might have said that in a rhetorical way whether he were religious or not—and Beatrice was as religious as a pirate or as Cellini who habitually thanked God with great heartiness when he got out of a disgraceful scrape.—You add "The feeling of her holiness is taken up again by her father's comment 'I had her fellow once'" (III, iv). But surely a father may be allowed in a play to be deceived about the holiness of his daughter. You then speak of her horror when De Flores asks her to give herself to him as if that were another reversion to the idea of her essential purity. I see nothing there but a shock at the sudden recognition that crime has bridged the wide gulf of social difference between the lord's daughter and her tool-villain—a shock at the sense of his impudence in daring to think that he can cross the gulf, and a reëmphasis of the physical repugnance for him which the author has admirably brought out in an earlier scene.

But instead of haggling along over individual passages I will try to set forth my notion of the play as you have yours.

I am not certain that I clearly understand what you mean when you say that Beatrice has no "ethical center." Certainly she does not belong to the group of heroines to which Desdemona and Webster's Duchess of Malfi belong. She belongs distinctly to the criminal heroine type which flourished from about 1610 onwards, and which includes Lady Macbeth, Evadne in the *Maid's Tragedy*, Vittoria in the *White Devil*, Bianca in *'Tis Pity*, and many others. Her center is a passionate will, and I am entirely ready to believe that plenty of women in history have had no other center of conduct than that. In fact I do not see how it is possible to explain the careers of any of the great women criminals unless you assume that the source

of their acts is a passionate nature without ethical core. If the dramatist feelingly persuades me that his heroine is passionate, and if he supplies circumstances favorable to the release of passion and specific stimuli to call it forth, and if the passionate acts are stamped with the peculiar marks of the heroine's temperament—then I call the play motived.

Now it seems to me that Middleton has from the first sharply conceived and delineated the passionate character of Beatrice. You say she is first seen in Church (I can't leave your special pleading alone). Well, you may see all sorts of people in church. The Catholic governor and his family would of course go to church in Middleton's time. Their presence in church would indicate nothing necessarily of their private morals. Furthermore, it is part of the tragedy that Alsemero is deceived almost to the end about the real character of his bride. His Christian piety is the foil of her pagan passion. I cannot see what right you have to charge the dramatist with inconsistency because the lover has made a mistake.

For though B. is first seen by Alsemero in church, she is *first shown to the audience* in a hot-headed whispered interview with her lover. That first glimpse of her on the stage shows her *precipitancy*, and reveals Middleton's intuition regarding her. Only a few lines later she is shown to us again revealing a certain violent *audacity* in the chiding of De Flores. A few lines further on she is *deceitfully* commending her lover to her father. A little later her father announces abruptly that she must be married within a week. She reveals again her power of *concealing her intentions* and she reveals her *resoluteness of purpose* in that brief ironical whisper to her lover (I, i):

> "I shall be sorry if you be not there
> When it is done, sir; but not so suddenly."

Finally comes that superb stroke of character in action when she flings her glove to the floor because De Flores had handled the other—a stroke revealing the violent impulsiveness of the girl's temper.—All this, sir, is in the first scene. I insist that there is not one stroke in that scene which can legitimately be interpreted as marking her as a pure or moral woman.

If you went through the play judging her by what she says

and what she does and by what De Flores says of her and to her—for he is the only one who sees her as she really is,—and if you refrained from imputing to her qualities which exist only in the minds of a deceived father and a deceived lover, I think you would find her to be drawn consistently as follows: Daughter of a Spanish noble, proud of her rank and presuming on it, accustomed to having her way unchecked, familiar with the unscrupulous shifts practiced in small Italian and Spanish Courts in the Sixteenth Century, bold, passionate, pleasure-loving, self-indulgent, lacking in foresight, withal a little childish, sensual, and ready to play with her feminine attractions like a gambler. All these traits are in her and they all hang together. And to my mind her acts flow plausibly from this source—her character.

Now for special circumstances you have this initial situation. Her father announces that she is to wed Piracquo within a week. She resolves that she will not wed. *Explanation:* she is a resolute self-willed character. *First motive:* She does not love Piracquo. *Second motive:* She passionately loves Alsemero. In Middleton's time the authority of fathers over their daughters was much greater than it is to-day and in America. It is no exaggeration to say that for young women in the situation of Beatrice there was frequently no escape but death. (Penelope Devereux, for example, daughter of the Earl of Essex, was literally dragged to the altar and married to Lord Rich, protesting all the way.) In such a society certainly a dramatist is warranted in assuming that for Beatrice there was no escape but death. Given a character like hers, it seems entirely plausible that she resolve that it shall not be *her* death. Alsemero suggests that he will put his rival out of the way in a duel—certainly consistent with Italian and Spanish ethics of that age. She insistently declares that she can't risk him—his life is too precious to her. Then she hits upon the familiar expedient of the tool-villain—a shift by which she expects to rid herself of the two obstacles to her happiness. Her desire to get De Flores out of the way is almost as powerful as the desire to remove Piracquo—and certainly no one can say that her aversion to De Flores has not been adequately motived.

After the murder of Piracquo, her surrender to De Flores and other atrocious acts are "motived" by panic and by a

recognition that she is gambling for her life. I don't attempt to justify all that mess with the maid, though I swear that and the burning and stabbing at the end are scarcely more sensational or incredible than the final scenes that one reads of weekly in the newspapers.

As for Middleton himself, he certainly cannot be charged with a failure to administer poetical justice. He found his story in Reynolds' *Triumph of God's Revenge against Murder*, and he carried out the intention of that title remorselessly. Beatrice buys her pleasure with a crime, which she pays for with another crime, which she pays for with her death. There is no attempt on his part, as there is in Ford and to some extent in Beaumont and Fletcher, to glorify passion. He holds with Bacon that the "stage is more beholden to love than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever a matter of comedies and now and then of tragedies, but in life it doth much mischief, sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury." Cf. Burton: "This comeliness and beauty which proceeds from women causeth heroical or love-melancholy.—The part affected is the liver; and therefore called heroical, because commonly gallants, noblemen, and the most generous spirits are possessed with it—deserves much rather to be called burning lust than by such an honorable title." It is the special passion of an idle nobility—"We may conclude, that if they be young, fortunate, rich, high-fed, and idle withal, it is almost impossible that they should live honest, not rage and precipitate themselves into these inconveniences of burning lust." . . .

If you want really first rate illustrations of your thesis let me commend to your attention the characters and conduct of (1) the two brother assassins in the *Duchess of Malfi;* (2) the conduct and character of Mrs. Frankford and Wendoll in the *Woman Killed with Kindness;* and (3) the conduct and character of Mrs. Wincott and Delavill in *The English Traveller;* Piero in *Antonio and Mellida;* Euphrasia-Bellario and Philaster in *Philaster.* Take anything but *The Changeling.* If you want one of Middleton and Rowley's, take *The Fair Quarrel.* But the real gems of spotty isolated effectiveness, and rank inconsistency, and total failure of motive in the crucial scenes are to be found in the first three (and almost anywhere you please in Beaumont and Fletcher).

I cannot close this hurried confutation of your heresy without pausing to remark that the best biographical portraits before the Eighteenth Century are the lives of Augustus and Claudius in Suetonius. If modern realism has discovered any art of betraying character unknown to the painter of these two full length masterpieces, I don't know what it is. You will surmise from this burst that I spent last week "discovering" a new author. There was a man with a sense for reality. For the moment I can think of no experience which has given me such insight into the meaning of the Renaissance as the evenings I spent in making for the first time acquaintance with him. For the moment I define the Renaissance as a purging fit in which Europe begins the meritorious but almost hopeless attempt to get the Middle Ages out of its system. I am also prepared to elaborate a remarkable analogy between the corruption of the pristine character of the Romans by the barbarians οἱ βάρβαροι and the corruption of the civilization of King Alfred's times by Celts, Danes, Normans, etc., etc. This is also due to Suetonius. But the exposition of all these beautiful truths and mysteries must be postponed to another day.

Very truly yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

After an almost complete interruption in the year of his administrative duties, the flow of Sherman's reviews to the *Nation* had been resumed, not perhaps with the earlier rapidity but with all of the earlier force. He had set a sufficiently high standard with his essays on Meredith, Anatole France, and Thomas Campion. To reappear with a long discussion of Alfred Austin was a little to endanger the seriousness of his critical position, even though he managed to elicit some amusement at the expense of the self-satisfied poet laureate. He fully atoned, however, in the following year, with the essays on George Moore[4] and John Synge.[5] Here he was pursuing his favorite foes—æstheticism and exoticism—exposing skillfully and brilliantly the unhealthy spots in contemporary literature, penetrating as it were to the diseased marrow of great reputations. Here he was on common ground with Mr. More and Professor Babbitt, both

[4]April 18, 1912.
[5]December 26, 1912.

of whom applauded his well-directed shafts. From the latter the essay on Moore brought one of his infrequent bits of commendation: "The critical gift you are developing strikes me as just the kind that is needed in the country and at the present time. I am beginning however to look on you as a very dangerous man (*foenum habet in cornu!*) and am going to do my best to keep on good terms with you."[6] Some of the compliments that Sherman received on this occasion he swallowed with a rather wry mouth, particularly those that came from official Catholic sources. He was not at all comfortable with these allies. "I wish," he wrote ruefully to Mr. More, "that Babbitt could in some way learn of this last, for at our latest meeting he still insisted that I showed the unintelligent 'brooding eye' of the Romanticist. We are 'coming on!'"[7] He was both amused and nettled at being dubbed an "Anglo-Saxon ethicist" by a professor of the University of Pennsylvania. The fact was that he felt keenly the artistry and the literary seductiveness of these writers and did not enjoy being charged with bigoted blindness. Replying to an admirer, he says: "The great danger of attacking the creature [æsthetic naturalism] is that if you resist his infinite seductive graces and say a word for character, you soon get the name of a callous flamen bleeding art on the hoary altar of morals, and then you are unheeded by those whom you wish to reach."[8]

It is clear that Sherman was not satisfied with the one-sided mode of presentation which writing for the *Nation* imposed upon him. What he would have liked to do may perhaps be fairly inferred from his approving description of the procedure of a certain French critic, M. Victor Giraud:

"M. Giraud represents that virile and whole-hearted criticism which the stricter Hedonic sect assures us is not 'literary.' Primarily a critic of ideas, his judgment steadily cuts through the book into the life beneath the book. In his court, the æsthetic is only one of many vital questions. His procedure, which is sufficiently systematic, is somewhat as follows: he exposes, first, the origins of a talent in native temperament and external influences; he proceeds then, with careful attention to chronol-

[6]June 7, 1912.

[7]May 8, 1912.

[8]Letter to Michael Williams, April 7, 1913.

ogy and frequent recourse to fugitive and uncollected material, to follow the unfolding of that talent and to measure its power in the various *genres;* finally, he brings the results of his analysis together to form a fixed and distinct physiognomy, in which the religious, philosophical, political, moral, and æsthetic lineaments are strongly illuminated by the light of the critic's own convictions. From the individual authors he rises, in the last chapter of *Les Maîtres de l'heure* to a consideration of the total personality and character of the epoch; analyzes in similar fashion its origin and evolution; gives it sharp definition; compares it with other epochs, and judges it."[9]

For this sort of discussion the *Nation* did not allow the needful elbow room. Even when he thought that he had practised much self-denial, his articles on Moore and Synge were returned as being far beyond normal length. The editor requested that the latter be cut practically in half, admitting that the stuff was all interesting and that the article would suffer from such heroic condensation, but perhaps not so much as the author feared. The author perforce submitted, but not without a pained and rebellious protest at the violence done to his offspring, and he relieved himself at the same time of certain important reflections on the general plight of writers for the *Nation.*

(*To P. E. More*)

1016 Nevada St., Urbana, Illinois,
December 16, 1912.

DEAR EDITOR:

Reeking with the blood of my offspring, I mailed this morning what was once my essay on Synge—a bright happy creature with a high brow and arterial blood coursing through his connective tissues. It is now a mere puddle of gore and bones, head severed from trunk and cast into the sea, joints disarticulated, gobbets lopped off here and there—begob, a regular "suitcase mystery."

Say that I ought to hire a boy to count my words or a writing master to correct my hand. But don't charge me with wilfully and maliciously trying to "put one over" on my editor with

[9] *Nation,* November 19, 1914.

this fatally fine script of mine. Would I be pegging away at it from midsummer to December just for the fun of cutting it through the middle in the end of all? I came down from Madison on Sunday noon, where I had been spending a week-end judging a debate, innocent of all guilt, expecting to cut out a paragraph or maybe two, but never dreaming of this horrid length more than you.

I don't feel that the piece has been improved by the pruning. For even the somewhat elaborate introduction with the presentation of the diverse views of the populace, journalists, and experts seemed essential to place the discussion. And in the body of the essay merely to indicate the point of view without developing and illustrating it was peculiarly unsafe. But I leave that now to you. I have never tackled a man so difficult to get at, or so complex to explain in spite of his essential simplicity; I mean complex in his literary relationships and simple in his emotional tendencies.

The general thesis is, as you say, the same as that in your essay on Fiona Macleod and other Irish essays. And, if you will permit this additional contributorial insolence, I think it has the same fault. I have meditated very frequently upon the "*Nation*-essay"—from the point of view of an outsider. In the space at our disposal it is necessary to be very curt. And I think we contributors—and you as well—are paying a penalty for this curtness. We get the credit for having *no æsthetic appreciation*. It is an unfortunate fact that nearly all the best writers, French and English,—the living writers—have something fatally wrong in their moral and intellectual processes (Correct me, if I exaggerate). We break their necks in a *Nation*-essay and wash our hands of them. We ought to have space to show that we, too, understand all the seductions of their hyacinthine locks *before* we break their necks.—I rode up to Chicago Friday with an artist who has sojourned in Paris. "Tolstoy's book," she said, "really hasn't anything to do with ART." Well, that is about what they think of our works—pardon the insolence of the plural.

You will understand that I have no desire to *please* this lady or the artists. But it is very essential to our purpose that they should think these essays have something to do with art. As Babbitt so admirably said in his Bergson essay, we should

oppose enthusiasm to enthusiasm. Just at this moment I cannot recall a really luminous opposition of enthusiasm to enthusiasm in the works of I. B., though a long series of brilliant neck-breakings recur to memory. In your own essays as elaborated in book form there are admirable examples. But as they appear in the *Nation*, many of our works seem to such persons as my lady friend mentioned above to have a certain chilling negative force which deprives them of their due weight with the artists.

I submit this rather as a question than as a criticism, and it is a subject for an essay rather than a letter. I can only "indicate the point of view"—and that with inward hesitation. Sometime when your labors have lightened I should like to have your opinion on the subject. The question rose again in my mind when I had finished the Synge essay. I do not refer to the condensed version. Even in those fifteen original columns I had said hardly a single word to indicate that I had felt for a moment the powerful, and to a certain extent perfectly legitimate, seduction of the man's extraordinary literary talent. The question then in brief is, whether the *Nation*-essay is not as a rule defective for its own purposes on the side of æsthetic appreciation.—I warn you not to leap to the conclusion that this thing has suddenly occurred to the troubled mind of the "Middle-Western Ethicist." It has lain there smouldering for years—as a pure question of critical method. . . .

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

I have never yet found heart to go to the meetings of the M. L. A. This is strictly confidential.

Mr. More's reply was soothing and justificatory:

"In the first place let me say that you have refuted yourself. An essay which brings so much commendation as your Synge certainly cannot be abnormal. Not only have all the men in the office here been delighted by it, but Bryce wrote me that he saw such work nowhere except in the *Nation*. I do not say that this essay and some others might not be better if they were longer, but the improvement in both cases would be less than you think. And the hard fact remains that the *Nation* is not a general magazine and only by some sacrifice can give a meager

nine columns to an essay. The side lights, the romantic appreciation, suffer no doubt; but most of the people who complain of the resulting 'harshness' would be satisfied with nothing less than an overflowing measure of gush—and an overflowing measure of gush is not likely to be found in any journal, or magazine, over which your humble servant presides. . . . After all, an excess of judgment over 'appreciation' is no bad thing these days, and 'enthusiasm' makes me afraid."[10]

A week later the old wound is revived by a threatened mutilation of one of his industrious notes on the *New English Dictionary*, and Sherman gives his editor an account of the prodigious labor which has gone into the making of his modest-seeming contribution. The zeal and conscientiousness of it are typical.

(*To P. E. More*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Ill.,
January 24, 1913.

My dear More,

I am becoming a nuisance—I am already a blasted nuisance. This N. E. D. note is marked "Sherman One." Does that mean that the rest of my dissertation on "sentiment" was set up? Obviously the thing was far too long. If I do that again, you had better drop me from your contributorial staff. My only question is whether you have thrown away my better half—that in which I get ahead of the Oxford Dictionary on a half-dozen forms of the word *sentiment*.

Let me tell you that is no holiday job. You inquired when I saw you last where I got hold of these unrecorded words. I have a note on this latest exercise and can answer the question. In preparation for the discarded sheet I read hundreds of pages in nearly all the following authors and turned over a large number in all of them:

1. Locke
2. Hobbes
3. Cudworth
4. Norris

[10] January 16, 1913.

5. Shaftesbury
6. Mandeville
7. Shenstone's prose
8. Gray's letters
9. Young's prose
10. Vol. of Seventeenth Century sermons
11. Edwards' Works
12. Wesley's sermons
13. Society for Reformation of Manners 1698
14. Gildon's *Post Bag Opened*
15. Dugald Stewart
16. Blair's *Rhetoric*
17. Gisborne, *Female Sex*
18. Burke, Reynolds, Chesterfield
19. Beckford—*Elegant Enthusiast*
20. Walker *The Vagabond*
21. Westbrook *Vale of Glendor*

12 volumes of British Essayists

Total: c. 40 vols.

When you are asked how the *Nation* preserves its high level, you can say "Oh, our contributors frequently read forty or fifty volumes in preparation for a single sheet of manuscript, which we frequently discard!"

Sherman's correspondence with Mr. More continued to be conducted in terms of mutual friendship and respect, even though the two men were aware of the divergence of their feeling about important matters. On more than one occasion Mr. More assumed the privilege of an older man to admonish Sherman of the perils in his intellectual make-up. When the latter mentioned a philosophical novel he was meditating, Mr. More remarked that he would take great delight in reviewing it and showing "how a certain hesitancy in fundamental principles made it piquant and *troublant* but not quite clear in the final impression conveyed."[11] It has already been noticed with what surprise and incredulity he received Sherman's enthusiasm about state universities and his faith in the possibilities of popular institutions. That was the dangerous romantic streak which

[11]March 19, 1913.

he sought to combat in him. When toward the end of that year Sherman submitted his essay on William Cobbett, the editor saw his opening and scored a palpable hit. In that essay Cobbett is treated as a portent of the new democracy—"a tremendously efficient, unscrupulous, materially minded, half-educated egotist of talent . . . too serious for the pleasures of life, too overbearing for society, too busy to eat his meals like a Christian. Risen from the masses, he understands them, and inwardly despises them as unintelligent rabble. Yet when he has promulgated a half-informed opinion, he is willing to appeal for support to the brute numbers of the totally uninformed. Secretly desiring to hold first place in the seats of the mighty, he despises those who are really his superiors in breeding and culture, and does not understand them. Missing the preëminence which he thinks is due him, and agreeing with Wesley that it is better to rule in hell than serve in heaven, he is ready to seize upon the proletariat as upon the jawbone of an ass, and make havoc of all that thwart him." "In his hands," the mournful essayist concludes, "is our salvation, and in the day of his triumph Heaven pity those who are left in the minority."[12]

The inconsistency in spirit between this and the earlier utterance was sufficiently striking, and the rebuke which Mr. More then administered was lacking neither in truth nor kindness:

". . . Your dislike of Cobbett as an 'incarnation of (various epithets) democracy' bewilders me a bit. What else should he be, or any one else be? Are you too developing a heinous love for the 'patrician element' in intellect and character? Do you know that with all your genius (for you have a touch of that, my dear boy) you have not yet quite found yourself. There is a sort of intellectual Armageddon (the Professor's vocabulary is catching) fighting about us, though the fighters on one side are piteously few, and a staunch man is bound sooner or later to pronounce 'under which king.' We attack the enemy as Romanticism, and get abused for callousness to things of the imagination; we attack it as unrestrained democracy, and are called Snobs, or reactionaries or haters of the people; we attack it as pragmatism, and are simply not understood. Meanwhile,

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[12] *Nation*, February 5, 1914.

you, who could knock down five good men in buckram any day, are skirmishing gayly and shooting your bolts a little at random. 'When the literary critic fifty years hence' comes to deal with S. P. S., what is he going to say? This may sound as if I were trying to make a poor joke out of your commendation of my paper on Norton; but I'm not; your praise in that particular gave me something more than pleasure. But I have been asking myself just why that essay should have appealed to you in so peculiar a way, and have been wondering whether it is not for the simple reason that I let myself go in it. Well, it is no doubt a good thing to let oneself go occasionally, but is it not true also that the special evil of our day is just the universal 'letting go'? And is not the first office of the critic to stand against that intellectual ease? I do not mean to imply that your work shows any signs of letting go in its intellectual fibre; there is plenty of brain work in it always and sturdy discipline, but sometimes I ask myself whether you have not an inclination to avoid the central problem."[13]

There was really no effective reply to this, and Sherman's answer is in the nature of a counter attack upon the vulnerable points in his opponent's position. After allowance is made for his irrepressible urge toward irony (had not Mr. More himself spoken of him as "our finest ironic pen"?), his letter throws light upon his leaning toward the humanitarian attitude and upon his conviction of the importance of enthusiasm in the critic's equipment.

(*To P. E. More*)

1010 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 6, 1914.

My dear More:

Mr. Holt wrote me a note the other day saying that he was sending me a copy of the new *Review*, and asking me to write something for it. This alleviated a little my oppressive sense of sin after reading your Christmas-eve sermon. One man, anyway, I said to myself, thinks me unpopular enough to be serviceable in the grand cause of "reaction." And I have written him a very graceless note, of which I hope he will have insight

[13]December 24, 1913.

enough to perceive the gratitude. But to my surprise I find two cards thrust in, one bearing your compliments, the other the Editor's. What, then, are you? Is this to be the Abbotsford of your journalistic retirement?

You intimate that my young friend Nevins has a certain Scottish seriousness of temper. Now that is the very temper to make a good Tory writer. He is serious, reverent, aggressive, positive, potentially dogmatic. You can put a good cutting edge on a young man like that. I am essentially skeptical, indecisive, tolerant, irreverent, with an inarticulate sense of comedy. I get the point of the new *Review;* but I am not stout enough, bald enough, rich enough to forbear asking what is the use, with Armageddon howling around us, of *being unpopular only four times a year.* The *Nation* is a good fighting weapon; to what soft-hearted, sympathetic, unsifted, humanitarian Christian do you relinquish it?

I frankly admit that on some essential points I have not found myself. I can't entirely follow you in your article on the New Morality. (By the way, Showerman, whom you have let in, is in my opinion also only an academic skeptic in wolf's clothing.) I can't follow you where you speak of sermons on the "obligation of the individual soul to its maker and judge." (We have an Episcopalian clergyman in town who preaches that: his vestments are washed by the ladies of his flock; he refuses to administer the sacraments in outlying districts which he cannot reach before seven in the morning; and I have a deep presentiment that Jane Addams will be a ministering angel when he is howling. By a singular coincidence he too thinks but meanly of the great Chicago settlement worker.)—But to return to your phrase. Is it a metaphor? Doubtless as you use it, it is not; but for me God is still a metaphor by which I objectify an inner sense more exacting than any external authority. And yet, as I see the matter, every "obligation of the individual soul to its maker" runs somewhere through the heart or liver of a fellowman. Isn't it possible to take up a position of friendliness to both the first and second commandments? You decide for the first; Jane for the second. You condemn her for neglecting the individual's obligation to his maker. She would condemn you for neglecting yours to your fellowmen. And the gulf widens between your followers and hers. Now, if it must

come to a choice, I should prefer to be numbered with the seraphim. I have no natural spontaneous desire to embrace the rascal many. But I am not yet convinced that it is impossible in an even-tempered fashion to love, like Mr. Roosevelt, my God on the one hand and my people on the other. It is perfectly obvious, to be sure, that God is getting in these days far less attention than his people. It is *easier* to restore the balance by throwing one's whole weight upon the extreme end of the short beam. But isn't it more *critical* to get somewhere about the middle of the plank, and to try to heave the whole thing back upon a central pivot? Or is that just a metaphor too? I confess that I am pretty much at sea in the whole matter; and also that your article is a most impressive argument for the angels and a noble piece of English. I progress very slowly in this direction because my "religious experience" of late years has been very thin.

I suppose my last year's article on "Education by the People" is still rankling in your breast. In this field my experience has been tolerably thick. In the microcosm of the University and in our relations with the state I have almost daily had glimpses into the dark bosoms of "good government" on the one hand and "democracy" on the other. I believe that I have no illusions in these realms! In any given assemblage of a hundred men there are perhaps five dreamers with no experience who are, in the innocence of their hearts, really "democrats." The other ninety-five are an aggregation of individuals, each one of which would like to run things himself. At the first taste of power, any one of them would knock the other ninety-nine on the head, and cease forever to babble of majority rule. In a certain sense, democracy is a grand theatrical spectacle; from another point of view it is a side-splitting farce. (I wish I had the indiscretion to tell you a little inside history of our educational democracy in Illinois. But I will save that for a private colloquy.) But if you happen to be living in a "democratic" government and wish to have your way in it, you must use upon the people either Gatling-guns or infinite patience and flattery. The latter method is more approved by experience. Furthermore, I sincerely believe that the use of flattery and patience will in the course of fifty thousand years have a more refining and uplifting influence upon the people than the more

virile approach which I have suggested as the alternative. In other words, I consider myself here a pretty good Tory at heart. A Radical, building on the Unknown, is naturally and necessarily a doctrinaire, precise and emphatic in the enunciation of his views. Your Tory prospers by speaking a little loosely, indirectly and jovially from the easy chair of experience—when he is in a room-full of Radicals.

This horribly drawn out hodgepodge was intended only to lead up to the announcement that in literary criticism I am a mystic! You irritate me, sir, by failing to get my point about the Norton article. I shudder to think that, uncorrected, my previous letter may provoke you to further "reaction." Quite seriously speaking at last, I believe that the critic's power, like the poet's, is at its highest something that cannot be defined or analyzed. It is the going forth of his hitherto closeted spirit after the thing that it loves. You say, "Is not 'letting go' the very vice which criticism needs to take its stand against?"—or words to that effect. To which I rhetorically reply, "Yes, so long as he is in the rings of Inferno, and all the way up the steeps of Purgatory till he knows himself '*puro e disposto a salire alle stelle*'; but when he stands at last in the presence of the Celestial Rose, for God's sake let him show his soul of adoration, let him fluently and mellifluously admit that he likes it, and not hold himself frigidly in expectation of caterpillars." Even the critic, it seems to me, has no right to come into the world and condemn the world, unless from time to time he can flash a vision upon the damned. The uncritical may justly complain that this would be "very gross behavior and very weak dealing." If he is bent on staining the "childhood of their joy" he must really reward them when they are men. But I fall again into foolish metaphor, which is difficult to avoid in these high mysteries.

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

On Mr. More's withdrawal from the editorship of the *Nation* Sherman felt the relaxation of his powerful stimulus.[14] Henry Holt was now launching the *Unpopular Review* and, thinking

[14]Letter to Carl Van Doren, January 24, 1914.

the opportunity good for enlisting Sherman in his forces, invited him to write something that would be congruous with the aims of the new journal. Sherman's refusal "to contribute to its unpopularity" is in reality another reply, moderately ironic, to the rankling accusation of Mr. More.

(*To Henry Holt*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 4, 1914.

My dear Mr. Holt:

I have read with great interest about two-thirds of your new Tory quarterly, and have received with a keen sense of honor the invitation to contribute to its unpopularity. It has been a pleasure to detect in the anonymous harmony the unpopular notes of Messrs. More, Shorey (?), and Showerman. The authors of the leading articles could consistently be hanged together. But what in thunder can the enquiring reader make of the shameless bid for the suffrage of the great vulgar multitude in "En Casserole's" divagations on tobacco? Unless my divining rod dips falsely, there lie beneath that passage the deep waters of popular seduction gushing eternally from the heart of the publisher. Furthermore—ain't y'goin' t' have any literchoor? My own struggles for unpopularity have hitherto been directed mainly towards the destructive criticism of successful works of poetry and fiction. In the course of twenty years, if I lived, I had hoped to be recognized as the William Gifford of America. And yet a Christmas letter from More, who, as I take it, has a hand in the *Review*, gently intimates that my critical conscience still lacks the requisite hardness—is still vitiated by traces of popular viscosity and flabby good nature. Till I have reformed these faults, I fear that it is useless for me to offer any contribution. But I do not despair; I feel myself ossifying day by day; when these processes are complete, I shall send you something stiff, truculent, and devilishly distasteful to everyone with an income of less than 3000 dollars per annum.

With the heartiest good wishes for the success of the enterprise I am,

Very sincerely yours,
Stuart P. Sherman.

It is possible that Holt did not catch the precise meaning of this letter. While it conveys clearly enough the writer's irritation, it will easily bear two interpretations as to his actual leanings. The publisher at any rate persisted for some time in efforts to draw Sherman out on such subjects as "Inspired Idiocy" (naming Plato, Ruskin, and Tolstoy for treatment under this heading) and "Demagogues, or the History of Popular Uprisings." Sherman repeated that he would have a try at the *Review* when his evolution into a thorough Conservative was complete, and that he was still evolving.[15] In another letter, after replying to a suggestion that he settle down in New York in a manner to impress upon publishers the niggardliness with which they rewarded his kind of writing, he outlines an "ironical-satirical article" in which the arrows fly with a much directer aim.

(*To Henry Holt*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
March 16, 1914.

DEAR MR. HOLT:

You New York editors seem to have got the notion that the Middle-Western professor is salaried by the state to assist you in resisting the Eastern "uplift." Now I will admit that your temptations to write "ripping" articles are very seductive, and I will make you a proposition. If you for your part will guarantee me complete leisure for writing and a salary of 4500 dollars, I for my part will go to New York and undertake to furnish you annually by my unaided pen not less than 500 dollars' worth of copy! I name 500 dollars to be on the safe side: by working steadily for nine months, I believe that I could raise the sum earned by my kind of writing to 900 dollars.

Now with reference to More's certification of my ability to deal with demagogues, I think he must be growing irresponsible since he left the helm of the *Nation*. (And, by the way, do you mark how the *Nation* is promising to blow its lid off?) Demagogues *is* a jolly subject, but, as I wrote you before, I am under a vow to undertake nothing new at present. You ask whether I

[15]Letter to Henry Holt, January 17, 1914.

have anything else simmering. I regret to say that I have, and it looks to me rather like a horse of the same color.

I have been thinking of an ironical-satirical article called "The Decadence of the American People"—or some such matter—with the sub-title "A Chapter in History." The conceit is, to write in the style of Macaulay or Gibbon—which of course I can assume at will—one of those "brilliant" chapters of generalizations on the condition of the country in 1914. It would contain such sections as:

I. *Universal corruption* in all branches of government: Call for a "savior of the people"; failure of democratic régime.

II. *Condition of religion* in intellectual, middle and lower classes: "atheism"; social reform; Holy Jumpers, etc.

III. *Society:* Luxury, dissipation, extravagant and fantastic diversions, etc. Dress, dances, theatre.

IV. *Morals and Crime:* in city and country.

V. *Poverty and Wealth:* Horrid miseries of the lower class; obscene wealth of the "capitalists," etc.

Now all these terrible generalizations would be based directly upon the daily newspapers from the various parts of the country, and each lurid statement would be supported like a well-documented history with footnotes referring to the source of information.

Points of the satire:

1. Satire on the methods of classical historians.

2. Exposure of the value of newspapers as sources of historical information.

3. *Reductio ad absurdum* of calamity-howling.

All this could lead up, if desired, to the ironical conclusion that the dissolution of the existing society calls for the abandonment of the Constitution and a new deal—the cards to be reshuffled, if you please, by one of the sanguine and popular demagogues of the day.

Is this, in another form, something like your own proposal?

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

If there is nothing here clearly intended for Mr. More, there are several stings for Mr. Babbitt. Curiously enough Mr. Holt still could not or would not see the point. "Your 'Decadence

of the American People,'" he replied, "might turn out to be something extra bully. Of course the occasional fool would have to be told you are not entirely in earnest."[16] When a year passed and the desired article was still unwritten the dark thought crossed Mr. Holt's mind that Sherman might be a Socialist. As to this he received a solemn assurance, but the gap between the position of the *Unpopular Review* and of socialism left Sherman with ample space for the exercise of a free intellectual criticism. There is little doubt that he was as yet in no mood to enter the camp of the conservatives and to accept their label.

[16]March 21, 1914.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BUSY LIFE

IN THE spring of 1914 Professor Alden resigned the chairmanship of the department and returned to Leland Stanford. Once more Sherman was called upon to step into the breach and assume the administrative burdens of an organization which had grown considerably in size and complexity in the intervening years. In offering him the chairmanship President James warned him that he would "go to the devil" if he took it. Once more a large part of his energy had to be put into searching for men to fill important vacancies. The university was still aiming high, and the task of winning over men of first-rate quality and distinction from other institutions was not an easy one. The first man to be approached by Sherman was Mr. John Erskine, and the nature of his desires is indicated by the style of the invitation. "We need a man," he explained, "who is a first-rate human being, a recognized scholar, successful teacher of graduate and undergraduate students, and not inexperienced in the general problems of a large department. In my opinion the most useful man for us will be one engaged in literature rather than in language. And I have found that the most stimulating teachers of literature are those who unite with adequate scientific and historical curiosity considered æsthetic and philosophical interest."[1] His hopes of persuading Mr. Erskine were not strong, and he indulged in no cant or pretense about the superior claims of Illinois over all other universities. "For just the right man," he told him, "we should try to make this position as attractive as such a position can be made in this part of the world. You will understand well enough at what points we could and at what points we could not compete with, say,—Harvard." When Mr. Erskine replied with a courteous declination, Sherman with a mournful sigh observed that "Stepping

[1]Letter to John Erskine, January 23, 1915.

westward, alas, does not seem yet to appeal strongly to the mature mind at peace with itself and with its environment elsewhere!"[2] With half-humorous deprecation he writes to another scholar, "We regret the seductive power of the great wicked city beyond your university. We wish that we might have been able to exhibit the paths of our village, too, as more amply fringed and starred with social primroses."[3]

It is abundantly clear from this that Sherman was not blind to the limitations of his university. Though personally he was very little disturbed by the absence of "social primroses," there were other conditions which weighed upon him, and he was not yet thoroughly at home in his Western setting. When President Meiklejohn, therefore, approached him in June, 1915, with the offer of a place at Amherst, his loyalty was put to a real test. At no time before 1924 did he give such serious consideration to the possibility of a change of residence. To Mr. Meiklejohn's first noncommittal proposal for a meeting Sherman replied with equal reserve. After the meeting the President of Amherst did his courting in a much more ardent vein, sparing no pains to impress upon Sherman the significance of his plans for the educational future of his college. Sherman lent an attentive ear and then applied for counsel to John Erskine, who knew conditions at Amherst, making clear at the same time his grounds for doubt and hesitation.

(*To John Erskine*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
July 22, 1915.

My dear Erskine:

President Meiklejohn has asked me to go to Amherst under conditions, as I take it, similar to what he has recently been proposing to you. He tells me that you have resisted gently all his allurements, and he also says that you raised certain objections, and that I may write to you and ask what they are.

I have written to him that the Illinois people will not allow the decision to turn on pecuniary considerations, and that my

[2]Letter to John Erskine, February 10, 1915.
[3]Letter to F. W. Chandler, April 9, 1915.

decision will rest primarily upon these two points. First, whether I should be blackballed and ostracized by the other members of the Faculty as an overpaid interloper; and, second, whether the position would actually allow the holder a good wide margin for private occupations, that is, study and writing after he has satisfied expectations as teacher and "educator."

If you are willing at this time to earn my everlasting gratitude you will write me a brutally frank note on the first point in particular, and you will add all the other "buts" that you can think of. Mr. Meiklejohn, whom I like very much, is a very poor hand at painting the defects of the position. I said to him very boldly in our conversation in Chicago that, if he brought in a man at a salary so far above the average, he might expect to touch rather deeply the exquisite jealousies of the professorial mind. And I can't recall now that he answered the objection.

I shall be grateful for your note whatever its tenor. For I am not in the least anxious to leave Illinois, where every one has been very friendly, and all sorts of new enterprises are humming. The hope of a quieter leisure for writing is the positive pull. And the apprehension of wounded sensibilities in Amherst is at present the chief negative force. If that is to be expected in any measurable degree, the attractions of Illinois resume their interrupted sway, and the Amherst scale flies heavenwards! . . .

Sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

The questions in this letter were answered reassuringly by both Mr. Erskine and Mr. Meiklejohn, and they had allies, furthermore, in Mrs. Sherman and Mr. Paul Elmer More. The latter had only recently been exhorting Sherman to throw the useless tasks of college administration to someone who couldn't do anything else and not to sink down into being "just a damned professor." When he heard of the invitation from Amherst, he urged him to accept. "Only," he said, "see that your promise of leisure is nominated in the bond, exaggerate your desire to loaf, even confess that you have an itch to write, make the President believe that you are a total failure in committee work and an ignoble shirker of all college duties—if you don't,

they'll have you tied hand and foot to the executive machine before you have been there two years. You don't know how to take care of yourself and need an academic guardian."[4]

Against all this concerted pressure President James acted shrewdly and tactfully. One night he dropped in for a friendly talk and sat into the small hours recounting the significant experiences of his own career, rehearsing his dreams and ambitions as they were connected with the University of Illinois. Without once referring to the problem that confronted Sherman, he touched him with a spark of his own vivid purpose and then allowed time for the flame to grow. On the following day he wrote him a letter in which, after acknowledging the attractions of Amherst, he set forth the opportunities at Illinois, particularly for influence on graduate students. "You," he went on, "are the first man who has been in a position of responsibility toward the Department whom I have felt to be equal to all the varied demands which such a position as you hold makes upon the incumbent. . . . I shall also feel if you leave us that you have not known the day of your visitation. . . . I realize fully what an attractive proposition the Amherst one is, but I think that the call to a life of leisure, of independence, of cultured ease, is as truly a call of the wild sometimes, depending of course upon the man and his abilities, as the attractions of commerce and trade to the man who is capable of something better."[5] This was the very language and the very tone in which to address Sherman, and it was of more effect in determining his decision than the liberal increase in salary which accompanied it.

To President Meiklejohn Sherman gave as his reasons for staying at Illinois his reluctance to break ties and unwillingness to desert the firing line and the chance to make himself useful in the democratic experiment. Mr. Meiklejohn bowed to the decision without granting the force of the reasons, declaring that there was plenty of fighting to be done at Amherst and that in respect of democracy he was not willing to give ground to such an institution as Illinois. As for breaking of ties, he warned him, "Sooner or later you are bound to have such an

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[4]Letter from P. E. More, July 24, 1915.

[5]July 26, 1915.

experience with whatever it costs to you and to others."[6] Mr. More was disappointed and annoyed. "I don't like this talk of democracy," he wrote to him; "it reminds me too much of the pontifical habit of waiting on the call of Providence and going where Duty leads—φλυαρία! The one supreme duty for a man in a democracy—or anywhere else—is to make the best of himself, and to do this conscientiously, even patriotically if the word is allowed, with the idea of influence and example. He will find such a programme anything but selfish, if he is honest with himself. . . . The East needs you as much as the West does; and frankly, I have a strong conviction that you need to get out of Urbana. Say what you will—I come from the West myself, you know,—a man needs to get among men of a different type from those of Urbana."[7]

The last point had also been raised by John Erskine and Sherman had replied: "I was not quite convinced that one couldn't be in a certain sense less companioned there than here. Our crowd is big enough here always to contain some men you would like to talk with, if you and they had time. It isn't an altogether solid argument, on the other hand, to say that Amherst is *within a few hours ride* of Boston and New York; so is Urbana! If I ever move now, it will be to some place which I am persuaded is heaven and not one of its suburbs."[8]

For better or for worse Sherman felt that he had cast the die and that he was now committed to the service of the State University and the Mid-West as he had never been before. There is no evidence that he ever regretted Amherst. On visiting it two years later, he wrote to Mr. More: "It would be an agreeable place for a New England novelist to live or even for a teacher of bright young boys. But to my lungs, accustomed to the rich smoky western climate, the air seemed too pure."[9]

Though Urbana seemed a very remote place to his friends in the East, the current of its life was not undisturbed by the commotion which was shaking the rest of the world. To Sherman the war came with the same kind of shock as to most Americans. He had not been utterly a dupe of dreams. A month

[6]August 6, 1915.
[7]August 6, 1915.
[8]August 1, 1915.
[9]March 1, 1917.

before the tragedy of Sarajevo he had published in the *Nation*[10] his mournful verses on the sad plight of Peace in Europe:

"Dragged in the ruined wake of war aghast,
Mid drums and trumpets smothering her cries,
Her wooed, unwedded, stricken life is passed;
By corpses in the cold moonlight she lies,
With all her soul abhors her lot is cast:
I marvel how she keeps the love-light in her eyes.

"What profit tears? What profit countless hands
Held up in prayer? Or hearts that for her ache?
Is not her sale-price known through all the lands?
What others traffic for shall we not take?
The White Slave of the Nations, there she stands,
And waits till we betray her for our honor's sake."

The lover of civil concord thus looked with trembling apprehension at a world living upon the brink. His studies had not carried him into the regions of *Realpolitik*, where the life and death of nations was a constant theme of cold-blooded discussion and the fate of human beings and humane ideals a matter of complete indifference; and the atmosphere of war was not favorable to a dispassionate and impartial weighing of facts. Sherman was caught up on the wave of common emotion, denouncing German policy in the persons of Bernhardi and the Kaiser and crying out with the rest of the world on the outrage to Belgium:

"Yet since your woe had wrought this lift and swell
Of world-wide pity, love and chivalry,
We say the awful sacrifice is well.
The old law holds; on this new Calvary
Humanity, uplifted, crucified,
Still draws all hearts unto its wounded side."[11]

It can be seen how a passage like this might be construed by readers as an expression of that attitude of mind which

[10] May 28, 1914.

[11] "Kaiser and Counsellor," *Nation*, November 19, 1914.

welcomed the war as an agency of moral purification. Against such a construction of his words Sherman instantly protested:

"Your comment on the Kaiser business," he wrote to Carl Van Doren, "indicates perhaps only that my expository gift is poor. I could not mean, of course, that the sacrifice was justified 'just because it gave the world a thrill.' The thrill is to be taken as the sign of the existence of a passion transcending that of *nationality*—namely, that of humanity. In other words the thought of the second sonnet is not complete till you get to the end of the sonnet. And the 'truth' of the idea in it depends on the first sonnet. That is, since at the present time a nation thinks that it may, with impunity, trample upon human rights recognized in international law, it is well that signal opportunity has been offered to the world to show that it will not tolerate the trampling. In similar fashion and for similar reasons, I should say that the crucifixion of Christ was well; for that figure was not introduced as a piece of idle decoration."[12]

The note of exaltation, indeed, that mingles with the note of pity in the lines quoted was not characteristic of Sherman's mood in the war. In the welter of mutual hatred and conflict he preferred to turn aside and linger in some "temple of literary concord created by Austrian, French, German, and American builders who in the higher brotherhood of men worshipped together."[13] Thinking on the war more usually wrung from him a cry of anguish and unphilosophical despair with only a perfunctory alleviation from the sources of ideal hope. The image of a reeling world and the bitterness of "peace *beneath* the earth" that dominate his revery on New Year's Eve give more accurately the color of his reflection.

Revery: Midnight, December 31, 1915

I

The dead are knocking at their Mother's door,
Though heaven knows her house is very full,
Though through her frosty lips she cries "No more!"
Still at the latch their fumbling fingers pull.

[12]December 3, 1914.

[13]Review of Gustav Pollak's *International Perspective in Criticism*, *Nation*, November 5, 1914.

In rocks, bogs, caves, and burrows in the earth,
Savage as in the old Silurian time,
The "heirs of all the ages" prove their worth
By frantic grappling in the frozen slime.
O stop the clock! No bells! Put out the light!
Lights out o'er all the world, lest, drawing near,
The astonished scouts of God detect to-night
There is no turning in our human year,
But drunkard Earth with freshly bleeding scars
Goes reeling in the old rut through the stars.[14]

In the vein of this poem he unburdens himself to Mr. More: "I seem to be looking out on a reeling universe, and when I look inward I see 'old wives' sitting about on 'old saws,' telling old tales. When I try to write a paragraph on any subject under the sun, I find myself raising questions about the most elementary and fundamental matters, and postponing my paragraph till some time when I shall have become perfectly clear about my alphabet. From which I conclude that it must be time for me to go into the wilderness and fast." Or, the after thought occurs to him, he might withdraw to Princeton, "or some such pleasant backwater, and, surrounded by all that 'refines and embellishes' civilized life, write a violent diatribe on the universe and a volume of fairy tales for children. . . . My pessimism and my regard for certain selected children below the military age are, or might be, fluent."[15] To Mr. More such bewilderment seemed deplorably naïve. "Any scholar," he replied, "who finds himself suddenly made dizzy by 'looking out on a reeling universe' is in a sad way. He needs a dose of hellebore. How old are you, my dear Sir, that only now your eyes have caught this terrible vision? The universe always has been reeling; was reeling long before the Prussians began their promenade through Belgium. There is no great author of antiquity who will not tell you something of the whirling wheels of chance. And, oddly enough, if anything is odd in this crazy world, it is only since men have set up the 'God Whirl' in place of Zeus that they have forgotten this too manifest truth."[16]

[14] *Nation*, January 6, 1916.
[15] October 27, 1915.
[16] March 13, 1916.

Sherman's defense against this reproof had in it more of warmth than either of fairness or of wisdom. Mr. More's serenity and ripeness had him at a disadvantage.

"I am a little disposed to quarrel with your mockery of my *youth* and astonishment at the reeling universe. If I were a person given to satirical flings, I should come back at you. I am not fallen into the illusion of thinking this war anything essentially new under the sun. But on the other hand I don't derive the consolation you seem to feel from the reflection that the earth has always been more or less of a reeling drunkard. If my father came home beastly drunk to-night, I should not derive any satisfaction from the recollection that he came home beastly drunk last night and a year ago last night, etc., etc. It would not contribute to my inner serenity to reflect that my father was an inveterate drunkard. On the contrary I should grow with each day more bitter and more desperate about the old man; and I should never be reconciled to his drunkenness, even though I never hoped to cure him. You, on the contrary, would slam the door on the old sot, and drawing on your Princeton slippers and dressing gown, lie back in your easy chair and read the pious Vaughan. I am glad that I have no taste for satire; otherwise I should be saying something like that, which might stir the still Depths of that pleasant backwater, already so rudely troubled by native and alien writers."[17]

"In defiance" he sat down and distilled the essence of his protest, making it fuse with some meditations on the art of Shakespeare which he was composing for the student paper:

"We in this troubled span of time look out upon a reeling universe. It is a blind eye that cannot see, it is a deaf ear that does not hear the trampling of herded millions, the flaming of ruined cities, the fall of the swaths of the dead, the bellowing of guns, fortresses and cathedrals that have outlasted kingdoms crumbling into the dust, the wide-devouring earthquake of war, the thunder of the tidal wave of death. Shuddering we cry: 'What shall endure?'"[18]

The war itself in these early years came no closer to Urbana than it could be brought by official or unofficial emissaries from the combatant nations—Belgian and French professors,

[17]March 13, 1916.

[18]*Shaping Men and Women*, pp. 233–234.

English publicists such as Norman Angell and Lowes Dickinson. None of them, however intense their abhorrence, brought with him the feeling of the immediate horror of the catastrophe in the way John Masefield did when he came to the university to read some of his poems. Newly emerged from the terrible experiences of Gallipoli, he bore in his saddened face the clear story of the human inferno. He spent a day and a night with Sherman, who felt immensely drawn to him as he watched his worn countenance, looking "just a bit like one crucified," and heard him talk shyly, reluctantly, of the suffering and heroism which his eyes had witnessed. He recited his poems with a sober musical delivery, and with a religious undertone which carried the impress of a "very true deep soul"—"the only genuine poet I have met in these later days," thought Sherman. At the latter's request the poet inscribed in a volume a line from one of his poems: "The days that make us happy make us wise." When Sherman took leave of Masefield he held his hand an appreciable length of time "with a strange feeling of affection for him." The only other visitor who elicited any such tenderness from him was Forbes-Robertson, who endeared himself not only by his poetic and moving performance of *Hamlet*, reviving an enthusiasm of student days, but by the charm and sweetness of his personal bearing.

When Sherman turned his back upon the offer from Amherst and decided to remain as head of the department at Illinois, John Erskine wrote to him reproachfully, "I now gather that you take yourself seriously as an administrator. If you do, heaven help the writer in you!"[19] The implied fear was not unreasonable, but, while it cannot be argued that his writing did not suffer, at least as regards quantity, in consequence of his official tasks, the quality of Sherman's production showed no falling off from his own high level. Even in the amount that he wrote it is only by comparison with his own potentiality that he can be said to have come short. His miscellaneous reviewing was in 1915 reduced almost to the vanishing stage, but that was because he was engaged in studies that called for comprehensive reading. He published more articles of serious critical interest during this year than in any preceding one.

[19]August 4, 1915.

Among the things that he brought to a head early in the year was *A Book of Short Stories* for use in high schools. This modest-seeming little text, as Sherman explained to Henry Holt in accounting for his neglect to write an essay for the *Unpopular Review*, contained not only a long "more or less original" article on the short story, but in addition "no less than ten immensely compressed articles on English and American writers—wastefully tossed to the negligent student."[20] This was not vain boasting. Sherman worked on this edition for high school boys and girls as seriously as for a group of his critical peers. His technical analysis of the short-story form is spare but thoroughgoing, and his critical remarks on it are judiciously corrective of the extravagant claims which it was then the fashion to make in its behalf. The little appreciative essays among the notes at the back of the book are truly remarkable pieces of writing to be encountered in such a place. Washington Irving is treated with unexpected sympathy, while the utmost choice of phrase is employed in defining the somber spirituality of Hawthorne, the poetic dream world of Poe, the brooding passion of Hardy, the surface color and the verbal glitter of O. Henry. The catholicity of taste revealed in these miniatures, in addition to the other critical qualities, might well suggest to the publishers that Sherman was the person to write a history that should do for English literature what Lanson's book does for French. Some years later the proposal was definitely made and a contract actually signed, but in the press of other interests the project was abandoned at an early stage.

He was, however, at this time actively involved in the editing of the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, along with Carl Van Doren, John Erskine, and Professor Trent. A series of letters beginning in the fall of 1913 and running for over a year shows what assistance he gave to that work in the way of advice and has interesting observations on his own contributions. To the first unofficial invitation to take part in the project, with the added suggestion that he make Jonathan Edwards his particular subject, Sherman replied (incidentally revealing the scope of his interest in American writers):

"It all sounds good so far as indicated—except that I am

[20] January 24, 1915.

about as well qualified to discuss the Finnish epic as Jonathan Edwards, and hope that the Father and Son will get together and cast me for another part. Of course I feel very much honored by my prenatal association with the Trinity, but fear that I shall be a dubiously useful person at this distance. It must be more or less satisfactory to reside at the heart of light and learning and meet in daily synod with the *Illuminati*. The number of persons of the younger generation who are qualified to write well of American authors and movements must be tolerably small, but the undertaking of this history should have a wholesome effect in stimulating interest in the 'national past.' Bro. Scott, by the way, ought to be able to supply some good material on the newspapers. Mr. Howells is an elderly gentleman, and if anything serious should happen to him you may ask my advice concerning the article on Mark Twain. Other writers on my list are Franklin, T. Paine, Thoreau, Hawthorne, O. Henry—a modest roll and a congruous."[21]

Evidently Van Doren, too, thought it was "a modest roll and a congruous" and provoked Sherman to defend himself as follows: "Your remarks about my suggested list of topics for the great American History of Literature were most uncommon saucy. I have now totally forgotten the list. All I remember is that it was vaguely thrown out as a suggestion of the territory with which I am not wholly unacquainted. Not at all as a prospectus of my powers."[22]

Three letters of January, 1914, are given over almost entirely to questions connected with the editing of the history and the writing of his own chapter on Franklin, and one of a later date shows him as mediator between the board of editors and Mr. Paul More.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 13, 1914.

My Dear Carl:

I have been meditating a whacking long letter to you, ever since the 18th of December, when the "open season" for big

[21]Letter to Carl Van Doren, September 18, 1913.

[22]November 4, 1913.

game began. The provocation was increased by your letter preceding the last—a very meaty and toothsome epistle, pronounced by feminine taste to be your best yet. But I have also been "meeting obligations"; read the nawsty proof of my old Ford book, which is now about half through the press; wrote introductions and notes on half a dozen authors for my little collection of short stories; wrote an outline for a little popular book on M. Arnold; wrote an article on Cobbett for the *Nation* —all this in the Christmas holidays. With a little extra application of pressure, I am hoping soon to keep up with correspondence and really live an active life.

The great *Am. History of Lit.*, or rather *H. of A. L.*, seems actually to be on the docks. My first intimation perhaps came from Whicher, as you suggest; on his return from N. Y. he promptly reported to me the substance of his conversation with Trent, and told me what I was to do! Not exactly that, but he told me more of that nature than I had heard from any other source. (Such is the constant experience of the incurious man: last spring one of our youngest assistants reported to me the substance of a conversation he had had with President James regarding an offer which was to be made to *me* from some university. This remains the only intimation that I received of anything being in the air—except a hint from Mrs. J.)

The subjects which you have laid out for me are very acceptable indeed, and I thank the Holy Trinity for its generosity. More ought to do a noble piece of work on Edwards and the theologians. You have a very beautiful pair of themes. How interesting American literature is after all—when you really get down to it! I speak from real feeling; for I have been devoting a good deal of private study to it lately. And you may be interested to hear that at the present moment I am full of one of my bubbling enthusiasms for *Irving*. The moment Whicher came in, by the way, I began to bubble about Irving, and he declared that your colleague Erskine also bubbles about Irving. The fact is Irving was a ripe fellow: almost the only American living or dead with the genuine ease and *sprezzatura* of an "old family" in the Republic of Letters. But since I have already committed this thought to paper I enclose you a complimentary copy of my note on I. Since there is such unanimity of feeling with regard to this author, can you not make

him, as it were, the hero and keynote of the history—thus dashing a little more cold water into the Frog Pond on Boston Common? If assistance is needed, by the way, in exalting New York as the center, you should be sure to get Brownell to write on one of the Transcendental Band!—Don't take this more seriously than it is meant. Of course we don't want a cornet solo, but an All-American symphony.

Is it planned to have anything in the way of articles on education, teachers, scholarship, etc.? If so, I should think Paul Shorey could write a magnificent history of the classical tradition—"Rise and Fall of the Classical Tradition in the American College."

I am in a "coming-on" disposition with regard to offering suggestions and nominating writers; but I really know so little of your plans that it is rather futile to throw out hints at present. I'm sure Scott will be up to the Journalism business. If you were really seeking another article from this source, we could probably put up a good man to deal with (1) colonial historians (Greene) or (2) historians of Western travel and exploration. When your outline arrives, I will break loose again.

(*To the Same*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Ill.,
January 24, 1914.

DEAR CARL:

Your able bibliographical article on B. Brown in the *Nation* of January 14 excites my pen and my admiration. This kind of work with its dense accumulation of minutely-observed detail—the school of W. P. T.—strikes my indolence dumb. This carries one back to the model bibliography of Melville for the *C. H. of A. L.* When I think of anything of like scope for B. Franklin, my imagination is thunder struck. Surely ye editors are not expecting poor writers on authors of encyclopædic range to rise to the plane of these original exhaustive lists of yours? You don't want a bibliography, do you? longer than the article? Reassure my apprehensive mind. While speaking of your recent publication I am reminded that your "Contrib. Club" piece in the *Atlantic* of Dec. did not pass unread by me. I liked it even better in print than in the original MS., which

is cherished in my files. The litany of deferred hopes sung there cuts into the very heart of memory.

To revert to my own old mutton. Your comparison of More's reaction against the Holy Edwards with mine against the loose Benjamin amused me much. It wasn't quite prophetic, however. The fact is Benjamin's ideas on this subject seem still to me to sum up pretty well "the religion of all sensible men." . . .

(*To the Same*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 31, 1914.

DEAR CARL:

I'm not sure quite how damnatory your latest 'pistle was intended to be. At any rate my conscience is quite clean of offense—as usual. You will recall that till very recently I have received very little information regarding the purpose of the *Hist. of Am. Lit.*, and that I am still, for that matter, pretty ignorant of the editorial and business organization of the enterprise. I did not in the least intend to intimate that your communications with me were irresponsible or "unauthorized"; but simply to give the New York editors a free chance to eliminate me at this point if the developments of the work in its later phase made it appear to them desirable to do so. Having been ordered to resume my seat, I do so; and await further orders.

I am greatly obliged to you for sending a copy of the "Contrib. Club" essay. Very neat, very learned, very moving to the bosom of the middle-aged young man of promise. I have ruminated in that fashion a good deal of late. But I have recently cheered myself with researches on the other thesis. I can't give you all my results, for they are not written up yet. But let me remind you at any rate of Anthony Trollope's mother. That good lady had reached the age of fifty-five (55) without ever having set foot in the Temple of Fame. I'm not sure that she ever ultimately reached the Inner Shrine; in fact, I think she took, like Wesley, to the open fields. But before she was gathered to "Arthur's bosom," between her fifty-fifth year and her lamented decease, she turned out, if memory serves, 116 volumes. *Sursum Corda!*

But why do I send these words of cheer to such a rabbit-

warren of productivity as yourself—such, to reënforce the figure—such a teeming anthill of enterprises. The figure alludes not to the size but the multiplicity of ideas.

I don't know just what to suggest on the list of authors. You have expert advisers near at hand on historical and philosophical topics. If I were managing a *Hist. of Am. Lit.*, I should try to get a bit of George Santayana's writing into it, if I could find a subject which he wouldn't merely poke fun at.

It seems to me that Thoreau ought to be treated by a philosopher rather than a naturalist: I believe you once suggested Burroughs, but I hope you won't get him. Someone ought to do both Thoreau and Emerson who can cut rather deep into ideas, and at the same time attend to the poetic and divine afflatus of the men. I admit, however, that I can think of no one but P. E. M. who would do it to my taste.

Aren't you going to let B. Matthews in on this? A variety of spots seem to ask for his attention. What, for example, is the field of a professor of dramatic literature?

I return to Shorey as the shining light for the discussion of classical scholarship, and recall to your memory the names of Brownell and Greenslet in connection with critics and essayists. But speaking of Middle-Western talents, what about Robert Herrick? (Of course you must view him with a somewhat greenish eye as a lad with a leg in two worlds.) Speaking of Erskine's chapter on the influence of American literature—which is a very pretty theme—is there anyone who could generalize on foreign influences in American literature? There are some pretty points under that head in connection with the later fiction.

Are you sufficiently impressed by the canniness from a business point of view of the Tudor Shakespeare? Of course you can't find a writer for a chapter in the *Am. Lit.* in each of forty different colleges; but if you could, how it would promote sales! This is a very base consideration, but some member of the editorial staff ought to keep it vaguely before the Board, or rather in the background of the Board's memory. You and Erskine are too idealistic young chaps to think of anything so vile; that is why I mention it here.

Well, here's enough twaddle for Sunday afternoon. I should like to get you in for a four-or-five-hours chat this evening.

If you were here, we should soon turn, I presume, to your favorite works, *Westward Ho* and *P. R.;* but I should ask you first whether you know Barrie's *When a Man's Single*, which has been my third choice for twenty-four hours. Very fine book to read with your wife in the half-hour which a man always gives to his family after dinner.

Yours,
S. P. S.

(*To the Same*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
October 30, 1915.

DEAR CARL:

I am returning to-day the Edwards manuscript. I have studied reasonably hard to determine mainly what sort of comment you expected to get from me upon it. You ask two questions. First whether I think P. E. M. has treated Edwards with injustice and in the manner of Beecher. To which I answer in the negative. It seems to me that he has brought out with force and clearness the intellectual vigor and integrity of the man and also the mystical and poetical elements in him. A little more might have been made to be sure of the more winsome side of him in human relationships, but I suppose P. E. M. did not think these traits distinctive or highly important in considering him as a thinker and a theological-philosophical force. The second point is whether a paragraph on his influence would be valuable. I should think it would. In the present treatment he has a little too much the air perhaps of a wreck on the remote sands of time. The addition of a few sentences showing his connection with the current of subsequent thought and indeed with the moral consciousness of New England would make him more of a *figure* in the literary history.

I read with interest Erskine's marginal comments. In several cases I think it is clear that a little filing of the lines would contribute to the effect. But I did not suffer as Erskine apparently did at several other points. I seem to feel a bit of the dissatisfied Episcopalian here and there. It is hard for a skeptic to write for a churchman; and the only wonder is that P. E. M. got by with so few wounds. You and I can hardly expect to understand these matters. For example I quite agreed with

P. E. M. that Edwards's exposure of his opponents on the question of the will was "triumphantly successful"; and that it so appeared in the summary. The passage that E. marks "childish—the problem no longer exists in this form," I think E. must have misinterpreted. If I understood P. E. M., that is also the point of his criticism: the problem no longer exists in this form,—that is to say, wise men no longer carry evil up to an "image of ourselves" but to a "cause" which they leave "in its own vast obscurity." Whether Edwards got his Berkeleyan ideas from Berkeley or from Locke or from Cudworth, I don't profess to know; but from what I have read I should infer that he probably didn't get them from Berkeley and that if they are in Locke, as E. says, they are in him *with a difference* which makes Edwards's relation to Locke, I mean his indebtedness to Locke, a matter of uncertainty, as P. E. M. suggests. . . .

The work on Franklin filled Sherman with a great enthusiasm. "I have had a great time this last month with Franklin," he writes. "If you want to get me really interested, speak of Franklin. Richest subject I have touched for a long time. Day and night I quote Franklin."[23] In his preparation he covered a goodly portion of Eighteenth Century literature and history and made the exhaustive bibliographical survey that the editorial plan called for. In the treatment, however, the labor and the careful research are so thoroughly subdued to the living interest of the matter that Sherman thought he ought to apologize to his fellow editors for not presenting "with sufficient fulness and system" the literary character of Franklin. Professor Trent replied: "If any chapter combining better solidity with brilliance is received from any other contributor, I shall rub my eyes. Perhaps here and there a touch may be called to your attention that might be omitted in order to tone the chapter a bit to the lustrelessness of some neighboring pages, but you'll be good-natured in your abundance, won't you?"[24] When the volume was published many of the reviewers promptly singled out this chapter for admiration, the Springfield *Republican* acclaiming it as "a masterpiece of balanced

[23]To Carl Van Doren, December 3, 1914.
[24]August 4, 1915.

understanding and brilliant writing."[25] The theme was indeed one to put Sherman on his mettle. The enlightened, cosmopolitan, humane, and genial Franklin engaged his sympathies much more powerfully than that embodiment of the Puritanism of the Eighteenth Century whom the editors originally tried to force on him. The result was a worthy forerunner to the gallery of representative Americans whom he was to portray in later years.

Sherman had hardly completed his study of Franklin before he began the series of essays on Wells, Dreiser, and Arnold Bennett which appeared in the *Nation* in the course of the same year. These papers were parts of a coherent scheme. The lay figures of Wells and the representations of animal behavior in the stories of Dreiser were contrasted with the beings of flesh and blood and the standards of human value in the works of Bennett. Sherman's object, brought to a point in the last of the three essays, was to define the conditions of a true realism as distinguished on the one hand from insubstantial fantasy and on the other from crass naturalism. A number of readers were shocked to see Bennett apparently placed above Wells as an observer and thinker on life. Mrs. Katharine Fullerton Gerould wrote an indignant letter to the *Nation* in which she spoke sarcastically of the attribution to Bennett of a "philosophy of life," expatiated on the meanness and the soullessness of his characters and point of view when compared with the seraphic interests of Wells, and concluded by asking whether in order to damn Mr. Wells it was necessary to exalt Mr. Bennett for qualities he did not possess.[26] The weapons with which he was challenged in this letter were very much to Sherman's liking. It was really not wise to provoke his sarcastic vein. With an air of serene innocence he reduced the essential differences between Mrs. Gerould and himself to two—"one a difference of taste and the other a difference of opinion." Then, after questioning the scrupulousness of his opponent's controversial method, he remarked that to her "final and skillfully worded question whether 'it is necessary in order to damn Mr. Wells, to exalt Mr. Bennett *for qualities that he does not possess*,'

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[25]December 2, 1917.

[26]January 6, 1916.

it is a pleasure to answer with an unequivocal no." By way of sober conclusion he raised a question on his own account:

". . . Why do all the admirers of Mr. Wells, including Mrs. Gerould, speak so disrespectfully of common-sense? To my obtuse mind, the common-sense of mankind appears to be its one priceless possession. It is the force which makes conventions effective, and I am almost ready to say with an old friend of mine that it is the permanent and awful element in religion. It has indeed the elusiveness and evanescence which we attribute to spiritual beings. In some seasons it tarries for a long time like a familiar friend by our firesides. Sometimes it is driven down the wind by an invasion of strange dreams and desires; and it vanishes from the earth, leaving a whole generation of the 'young' confusedly 'demanding' clear thinking and a clean-cut plan from the governing classes, and for themselves unlimited liberty for planless adventure, Socialism in the state and anarchy in the individual."[27]

On a remonstrance from Mr. More,[28] Sherman pleaded guilty to the use of an uncavalier tone, but, he said in justification, "as I have always held that a man can do anything that a woman can if he abandons his mind to it, I could not resist the temptation to give a little exhibition of the soft feline purr followed by the stroke of the feline claw.

"I agree also that the foolish public in some way which I can't explain got the notion that I greatly admired the social and intellectual life of the Five Towns; in spite of the fact that I fairly plastered the article with assertions that it was commonplace and humdrum. My philosophical colleague here in Urbana who asserted that I was praising an 'old hat,' exactly described what I intended to do. A wise young man from some other region, not astute enough to recognize an old hat after I had labeled it 'old hat,' said, on the other hand, that I was imputing

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[27] *Nation*, January 20, 1916.

[28] Mr. More, too, felt that Sherman had given too favorable an impression of Bennett: "Your papers on Wells and Dreiser and Bennett, especially the first, were capital; but I am inclined to think—and probably you agree with me—that you gave Bennett a little more than his due. The intention to set him off against Dreiser was good and sound, and your point of view was essentially right, but you left the impression, nevertheless, that you did not quite see the reservations which must be made when praising his somewhat Philistine art. Am I not correct?"

to Bennett 'a very high philosophy,' which he would not recognize as Bennett's even though it was extracted verbatim from Bennett's works, and set off by quotation marks.

"In these days, however, my respect for the Philistines is rather waxing than waning. They are dull sluggish fellows, to be sure, with low standards of satisfaction. But the Philistines fear God, and in their stupid fashion and according to their smoky lights, keep his commandments; whereas the Children of Light worship the great god Pan, the garden god, the dog-headed god of Egypt, and all the other dark-visaged deities after whom the heathen went a-whoring."[29]

To each questioner Sherman aimed to make a reply according to the spirit of the question. When Professor Firkins made some strictures much to the same effect as Mrs. Gerould's he received a straightforward answer in which Sherman's position in regard to Arnold Bennett is carefully restated and the occasions for misunderstanding cleared away.

(*To O. W. Firkins*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 31, 1916.

My dear Mr. Firkins:

Since you have added your remonstrance to that of Mrs. Gerould, I ought to feel very dubious about Bennett. But as a matter of fact your criticism leads me to believe that my exposition was more or less a failure as *exposition*.

At one point I am glad to be able to shove off the blame on Editor Fuller. He is responsible for the phrase "an estimate of his philosophy" which was printed at the head of it, and which gives an undue emphasis to the "estimate" and the "philosophy." I spoke in the article of his "bundle of ideas" as a "working philosophy," and rather deliberately strove to convey the notion that it is not a larger philosophical equipment than any self-respecting man carries with him at all times—a sort of tooth brush and nail file outfit. Nothing startling, nothing original in it—just a plain little kit such as everyone carries: there was precisely the reason why no one noticed that he was

[29]March 13, 1916.

carrying it. Furthermore, I remarked at the end of the article: "I do not attempt to speak *critically* of his philosophy." For why should one comment in solemn fashion on so simple a piece of hand baggage?

My real thesis was simply that Bennett *has* this little common sense outfit, and that it affects in an important way his representation of life in fiction.

A mistake on my part was the assumption that my Dreiser article would have enabled the readers of the Bennett article to see just why I considered Bennett's common sense important.

I am glad that you noticed the sentence about the "intellectual and spiritual poverty" of Sophia and Constance in my reply to Mrs. Gerould. I perfectly agree with you and Mrs. Gerould and anyone else who feels that the Five Towns are spiritually poverty-stricken. My point is that the Five Towns characters are not, like Mr. Dreiser's characters, positively destitute. I am sure, furthermore, that Bennett intends to represent most of them as poverty-stricken. Take Auntie Hamps in *These Twain*, for example. She is presented as a rather ludicrous, hide-bound, inflexible survivor of a coarse Wesleyan discipline, dying in an act of inhumanity to the servant in her house. She is presented as quite devoid of the compassion which goes with an open and flexible intelligence. Yet with all her dullness and harshness and ignobility she has an element of heroism in her—a little of the essential stuff of character. Specifically, she acts on principle and with conviction. She is not the slave of temperament and physical impulse. Bennett indicates clearly, to my mind, that her principles and convictions are unenlightened. He stands far removed from her principles and convictions, and condemns them in the light of humane intelligence. Yet at the same time I think he admires, and I myself certainly admire, the staunch way in which the poor old lady stands by her guns—the best guns she has! It is of course only relatively that she appears admirable. It is in relation to women, like the Dreiser creatures, who stand by nothing at all; and who recognize no standard whatever outside their own twitching nerves.—In relation to Clayhanger she does not appear admirable, because to a belief in acting on principles Clayhanger adds a certain flexibility and intelligence in applying them. Clayhanger is by no means presented as an

exalted mind or soul. He is a plain average man slowly unfolding and developing in very ordinary circumstances. And once more I return to the point that Bennett recognizes him as such, and betrays his recognition of Clayhanger's limitations by turning the light of comedy upon his egotism and self-satisfaction.

In Bennett's critical detachment I find the chief relief from what you describe as the "asphyxiating" atmosphere of the Five Towns. What you and others seem to miss in his novels is the relief that comes from presentation within the novel of ideal types or the overt philosophical discussion of the ideal. But Bennett's realistic method forbids the introduction of that kind of relief. He is bound to exhibit only the very incomplete incarnations of the ideal afforded by a rather humdrum materialistic middle class. Some degree of internal relief, however, he does supply by composing a system of elaborate contrasts, and by presenting a long tract of time; so that one is constantly invited to compare the beginning with the end of the era and the specimen of human imperfection with an extended series of other specimens artfully arranged to reveal the author's sense of relative values.

To clear up all the obscurities in my article would require another article bristling with new obscurities. It is difficult, as you will doubtless agree, to cram into a *Nation* essay any adequate account of the route by which you reached the conclusions presented. I hope that I have strengthened a little your suspicion that our differences are less deep than appeared on the surface. . . .

Sherman's occupation at this time with Wells, Dreiser, and Bennett determined the direction which his thoughts took when he came to deal with Shakespeare in the tercentenary year. Seeking for ammunition in his fight on naturalism, he scanned his works for their every utterance concerning "nature" and elicited from them a humanistic outlook which made of Shakespeare a protagonist in the campaign. It was decidedly an effective departure from convention to look at the greatest of Elizabethan poets not in the light thrown on him by his fellow dramatists but in juxtaposition to Spenser, Hooker, and Bacon, his intellectual and spiritual peers.

Four thoughtful essays, such as those that have just been

described, form a quite respectable literary output in a year taken up with tasks of teaching and administration. To them must be added an address at the initiation dinner of Phi Beta Kappa in the spring of 1915, which Sherman called "The Gaiety of Socrates." The delivery of this was a memorable occasion in the annals of the Illinois chapter. The four or five speakers who had preceded Sherman had discharged their duty with a conscientious solemnity not tempered with merciful brevity. The gathering was well subdued and awaited the last stroke with commendable patience. When Sherman rose and drew a formidable bulk of paper from his coat pocket (he virtually always read what he had to say) there was no inclination to gaiety in the audience, for he was not known to the campus as an after-dinner orator. However, he had not been on his feet two minutes before the atmosphere began to change. As one good-humored shaft after another drove home to the vitals of the notable individuals among the faculty and students in that gathering, his listeners woke up. By the time he had talked fifteen minutes they were waiting with eager anticipation for each new thrust, and so they were carried along through the deeper passages of his address and hardly realized, when the end came, that he had been talking for forty minutes. The performance was a triumphant illustration of the moral he was teaching, and wisdom that night sent her votaries away with wreathed smiles. The address[30] was printed by the Chapter for distribution among its members, but rumors of its wit and philosophy reached other parts, and the editors of the *Nation* insisted on publishing it.[31] The necessary adaptation and the disguising of the real names deprived it of some of its immediacy, but in this form too it gave delight to many readers. Triumphs such as this bring their embarrassments. One direct consequence may be seen in the excuse he is forced to send for a delay in his chapter on Franklin for the *Cambridge History*.

". . . I had nicely calculated the hours when the article was to be finished in the inter-space between the last examination and Commencement Day. Then like a bolt from the blue, the

[30]The full title was "Porro Unum Est Necessarium, or The Gaiety of Socrates."

[31]July, 1915; reprinted in *Shaping Men and Women*.

President ordered me to act as toastmaster at the Senate Luncheon. You will admit there was utterly no reason why I should have had to expect such a calamity—for all of us. One cannot resist Insurmountable Wisdom coupled with Despotic Power.—The long and short is I am nervously composing six speeches to be delivered day after tomorrow. Wed. night—Franklin. Sunday night—*finis D. V.*

Pray for me,
Yours,
S. P. S."[32]

[32]To Carl Van Doren, June 13, 1915.

CHAPTER XV

DUNEWOOD[1]

The Shepherd Invites His Love to Leave the City

Dear Phillis, since the world's perverse
And speeding now from bad to worse,
Let's breathe a sigh and cry, "'Tis pity,"
And up and leave the loathly city.

If you'll but drop your cold disdain,
And say the word, and take the train,
We'll go where happy lovers stray
By woods and waters far away.

Upon a bluff beside a lake
I'll build a cabin for your sake,
With fire-place where the logs shall glow
Like Indian campfires long ago.

When through our casements, opened wide,
The gray light wakes us drowsy-eyed,
We'll sally out, while rabbits skip,—
Barefoot, like them, for the morning dip.

Returning, see the rising sun
Gilding the treetops one by one,
Or guiding us with golden finger
Where the blue-eyed hairbells linger.

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[1]For many of the details in this chapter the authors are indebted to the article on "Stuart Sherman in Dunewood," by Dr. F. W. Scott, in the memorial number of "Books" (New York *Herald Tribune*), September 26, 1926, and to other materials furnished by him.

A brief grace said, we'll break our fast
With cream and blueberries while they last;
Then berries red and black are taken—
Topping them off with crisped bacon.

And when the room is set aright,
The floor clean-swept and sanded white,
We'll wander where the spirit leads
Through dusky glens or flowered meads.

Sometimes we'll sit upon the cliff,
Watching the yachtsman sail his skiff,
Or send our wayward fancies flying
Whither the wide-winged heron's hieing.

Or spy near by the crimson caps
Of fair coquettes a-swim perhaps;
And laugh to see the pretty sillies
Flecking the waves like water-lilies.

But if you are in pensive mood,
When stillness holds the enchanted wood,
We'll lie beneath a hemlock olden
Where shadows check the sunlight golden,

And I will make you pillows rare
Of sweet fern-brake and maiden-hair,
And when your peerless head reposes
I'll crown you queen with fresh wild roses.

And we will read some famous woe
That lovers had long, long ago—
How Merlin fared with her he met,
And Aucassin with Nicolette,

What pain and joyance Iseult knew,
And Guinevere, so false, so true,
Till all their sad and sweet distress
Is linked with your breathless loveliness.

And I will ask all birds that sing
And every fair and joyous thing
To raise in voices dutiful
High hymns to my lady beautiful.

And when the wood thrush sings no more,
And the waves break louder on the shore,
And the ruby beacon flings its shimmer
Over the deep where the dim stars glimmer,

When the moon makes magical the night,
And the wide heavens are filled with light,
When through the quivering leaves above us
The wood gods whisper that they love us,

O, then we shall wander hand in hand
Down the white reaches of the sand,
No sad thought back nor forward casting—
Wishing the night were everlasting.[2]

In these idyllic verses Sherman expressed something of the poetic charm of the spot in which he spent many happy summers in work and recreation. It is a pity that he did not live to carry out his cherished project of making it the theme of a *Family Walden*, reeking of poetry and philosophy and the woods and weather of Michigan.[3]

In the spring of 1913[4] two of his friends in the English Department, Frank Scott and Thacher Guild, acquired a tract of woods on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, between the towns of Manistee and Onekama, well up toward the northern end of the peninsula. It consisted of more than fifty acres of hemlock, pines, white birches, maple, and beech trees which had been allowed to grow tall and thick through more than fifty years of rest from the lumberman's activity. An old road, long unused, wound through the tract under overarching trees. The woods terminated at a bluff, at the foot of which a broad beach curved gently for a distance of about four miles between the entrance of Lake Onekama to the north and an elevated point to the

[2] *Nation*, July 15, 1915.
[3] Letter to Maxwell E. Perkins, April 27, 1923.
[4] See Letter to P. E. More, June 21, 1913, p. 204.

south which Sherman's classical fancy nicknamed Polyphemus' Nose. The idea of the originators was to create a summer colony for a small group of their congenial associates, and Sherman was the first man they invited to join them. The three "pioneer" cottages were erected that summer on plans provided by Mr. Fiske Kimball, at that time an instructor in the Department of Architecture at Illinois. They were built, to harmonize with their setting, of rough-hewn pine, with no interior finishing, and placed so as to be invisible from one another. Sherman's, situated near the edge of the bluff and commanding an unlimited view over the expanse of the lake, was a two-story affair, having, besides the kitchen, a large living room and small study on the main floor, with bedrooms and sleeping porch above. During most of the summer of 1913 he worked on the building with his own hands, supplementing on equal terms the labor of two hired men, laying courses of cement and stone for the foundation, putting on siding and rafters, shingling the roof and digging the cistern. Over the experiences of this first summer he rhapsodized in a letter to Carl Van Doren: "I have on my desk before me a picture of the fair haven we have left and my soul is troubled with nostalgic yearnings. Very frequently this summer we spoke of you and Rita and wished you were of that goodly company and in that divine place. Quite seriously speaking, I never hoped to spend on earth so flawless a summer—never expected such favor from the hand of God. I enclose a copy of the print I have mentioned and beg you to set it before your eyes and ponder it well and early, for the available lots are now few, and you really must come in."[5]

In similar terms he kept referring to the place in subsequent letters. "Come over into Macedonia and help us enjoy the grapes of Eskalon." "We are determined to have you and Rita with us in Paradise. . . . It is really going to be a divine place this year both to work and to play."

The mode of life here approximated somewhat to camping. In the early years particularly, when no one in the colony possessed a private conveyance and the roads were unimproved, the world outside was easily shut off. It was a walk of nearly two miles to the rural post box. The main source of supplies was

[5]September 18, 1913.

Manistee, nine miles away and accessible only by the wagon of the neighboring farmer, a gentle-hearted, soft-voiced Swede who with his stout-limbed son looked after some of the material wants of the community. For several summers the camp had a landing wharf from which journeys could be made rapidly by steam launch to Onekama, but after this was washed away by severe winter storms it was not rebuilt. In later years some of the colonists acquired Fords and even superior motor cars. One year Sherman also boasted the luxury of a Ford, but it was possible for him to spend an entire summer in Dunewood without entering the town save for a single visit to the barber's.

The daily routine involved a number of those chores which are done with relish while they still have a certain degree of novelty. Gathering wood for the fireplace and chopping it, carrying ice from the community ice house to the family refrigerator, sometimes looking after the gasoline engine which pumped the water supply, were some of the more regular tasks. For a time Sherman also took delight in doing useful carpentry, making screens, bookshelves, and even such elaborate furniture as study tables. One year he worked enthusiastically on a vegetable garden, which did not prove rewarding enough in its yield to encourage repetition; another year he hauled gravel and mixed cement for the construction of a tennis court. The more strenuous the physical exertion, the better he seemed to like it. In one of his later essays there is a passage recalling his delight in such occupations: "A night or so ago I was sitting before a fire with a robust and sanguine friend who, like myself, restricts a physical strength adequate for a lumberjack, adequate for driving logs through the rocks of a foaming river, to driving a little fountain pen over sheets of smooth white paper. We were full of the summer, full of the delight of not even trying to think, full of remembered pleasure in making something with our hands and in going somewhere with our feet—the sweet, heavy thoughtless monotony of building stone walls all day long in a country garden, the joyous, thoughtless effectiveness of swinging an ax in the woods and such entirely satisfying activities as swimming, canoeing, and tennis."[6]

Eating might be regarded as one of Sherman's daily chores,

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[6]*Critical Woodcuts*, p. 143.

Photograph by F. M. Roody, Poultney, Vt.

Photograph by H. E. Kinsman, Williamstown, Mass.

STUART SHERMAN AT FIFTEEN, AND AS A SENIOR AT COLLEGE

for much as he might talk of the delights of feeding, his æsthetic appreciation of it was at all times more a matter of literary feeling than of physical palate. Meals were therefore conducted on the simplest possible plan.[7]

In the early years of his life in Dunewood literary work was restricted to the forenoon. But as his college year tended to get more and more crowded with demands on his time and the number of his literary projects and commitments multiplied, he came to look upon the three months in Michigan as his great opportunity for unhampered writing. The hours of work were therefore extended gradually to four o'clock in the afternoon, and this portion of the day was regarded as sacred against intrusion. Untimely callers were likely to be met on the front porch and entertained by the pleasant gossip of Mrs. Sherman or perhaps led away to enjoy some distant view. If the sentinel for some reason happened to be off duty, an innocent or unusually bold visitor would find him bent over his study table, dressed in khaki trousers, soft shirt open at the neck or with a flowing magenta-colored windsor tie, moccasins on his feet, and a pipe clenched firmly in his mouth, deliberately and carefully covering a sheet of paper with his fine script. The visitor, if he had any perception at all, would probably become aware in a short time of an unreadiness in his host for conversation, however charming, and a marked impatience to be getting on with his own thoughts.

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[7]Sherman's real attitude toward eating is expressed in the following description of his favorite menus for a Christmas dinner:

"To my taste, a perfect Christmas dinner would consist of three tongue sandwiches, a bottle of coffee and a pipe of tobacco, consumed under a spruce tree on a patch of wintergreen berries in the Green Mountains, with a fellow huntsman, who would drop his tin cup in the snow and, without so much as a glance at his rifle, begin to recite the speech of Jacques to the wounded stag, if by chance we should see the liquid eyes of a five-pronged buck peering at us through the shrubbery.

"Assuming that I spend Christmas Day in New York, if I were captain of my soul and dictator of my dinner I should dine a little more heavily. I should sit down to the following feast: One bowl of Grade A milk, with cream intact; four crackers, one chunk of cheese, 2 by 2½ inches, of the best American variety—vulgarly known as rat-trap cheese—and one apple (Spitzenberg or Northern Spy, if obtainable). The meal might be served in any quiet place, and I would gladly have one or two guests—at the most three."

New York *Herald-Tribune*, December 20, 1925 (Section IV, p. 12).

Cf., however, his remarks on Christmas roast pig in the letter quoted on p. 147.

It must have been a feeling of remorse at the frittering of a day that caused Sherman to make the following entry in a diary as typical of how a day passed in Dunewood:

Sept. 1 [*1914*]. Rose at 8.—Went in for bath alone—rough water. Fried egg and breakfasted. Washed dishes of last evening and this morning. Shaved. Went to Red Park. Sat half an hour waiting for mail. . . . Return, find family from Onekama ahead of me. Read the war news from three or four papers. It is now the middle of the afternoon and Ruth and John have gone blackberrying. Have read an article in the *Atlantic* on Arthur Symons which contributes to clarification of an idea I have been beating on.

The essence of Dunewood for Sherman was not in the time spent in the composition of essays and books, but in the many happy hours in which he gave himself up to the natural sights and sounds of the place or indulged his aptitude for happy play with the colonists. Though not accustomed to think of himself as specially a "nature lover," his sensitiveness to phenomena led him to observe with interest the characteristic aspects of sky, water, and woods. He did not have to leave his western study to look out "over grey water of a couple of miles of intensest, almost intolerable silver with stormy broken clouds on the horizon," or to catch splendid after-sunset effects of "dull purple strata of clouds over still blue water with a gold base below stretching for miles."[8] If he stepped out of doors late in the afternoon when the sun was shooting its level rays directly against the woods, he might see each tree-trunk decorated with a plaque of gold, as though

> "A troop of knights at rest beneath these trees
> Have hung their shields against the swarthy trunks."

He records "the peculiar swishing of the poplar leaves, like a silk spirit," and the effect of splashes of white on the small maple shrubbery when the moon is half full. He liked particularly to note the effect of changes in the weather and of storms (as in the following entries):

[8]September 8, 1914.

"In sultry days, effect of storms sulking or skulking just below the horizon. Tremendous surf all last night still breaking when we woke. Now at nine the lake is still but its face is greyish black, as with spent wrath—partly the churning of the deep, partly the dull grey sky."[9]

"Wind roars with increasing velocity all the afternoon. Waves clay and grey-color roar incessantly. Motion of surge-like character in treetops. Everything shows its pallid whiter surface. Rags of birch-bark flapping; lilac-colored asters bent to ground; flame-like rush of undulous wind through wiry grass on sand-dune; anguished tossing of inverted heads of sumach; the silvery nether-surface of hemlock; the graceful bend of tall white birches of slender build; the occasional swift rush of a single green leaf from a tree down the blast; the white mane rushing over the breakwater; sitting by bluff in still spot at mouth of Glenwood Run watching a dozen gulls drifting sideways swiftly up the wind—'tacking' . . .—broken dead trees —loosening of earth about roots of tall maples, beetles on windward side—the livid reds and intense yellows along the sky-line and in jags of the upper sky about 7 P. M., when the woods here were all dark and the water and sky leaden—like a long gaping crevice in some volcano."[10]

There were also days of serene beauty and nights when everything in nature conspired to send a thrill through the wakened senses:

"In the middle of warmer seasons there come nights when one feels it a waste of life to sleep, so soft the air, so magical with moonlight. At about eleven the whippoorwill begins her passionate, throbbing plaint. An iteration somewhat unwearied. . . . Steal out of the house in bare feet which discover intimate sympathy with the sand. . . . Besides, in dark paths the barefoot man can keep the track by the spirit in his feet when his eyes fail. . . . Looking west on the left the moon, in the middle the planet (Venus), on the right the Great Dipper over the water. . . . Tonight pounding of heavy surf. . . . Two or three little owls quarreling in the trees below, flying so near one's head as to be alarming. . . . Palpitant cry of coon. Phosphorescent wood crumbling in the hands with queer, unearthly

[9]August, 1920.

[10]September 3, 1914.

lambescence. Northern lights draw us to the bluff—quiver halfway to the zenith. Passing, silent full-lighted ships. Bathing in the path of the moonlight."[11]

One of the prominent features in the outdoor life of the campers was the exploration of the neighborhood, sometimes for the sake of collecting flowers or insects, more often for the abundant berries. For Sherman these excursions were always an alluring invitation to get into the wilder places. He describes one expedition on which he went with a party carrying gun, fishing-line, and collecting bottles, to explore a near-by creek.

"A short distance inland the 2nd creek widened into a shallow swamp the borders of which were thickly sown with various-shaped snail shells afloat; laid in a small bottle full. Presently the swamp widened and deepened into a rushy ducky-looking lagoon which was identified as Mud Lake. The western rim of the lake, which rises ten feet above the water, is bordered with small bushes and trees which form a screen between the path and the pond very convenient for the hunter. We soon scared up a duck or two from the sedge, which I popped at as they hurtled across the eastern marge. Waded half-way across the lake for bobbing head. The girls filled their hands with luxuriant cardinal flowers and golden rod and then we wandered southward till we came to an old half buried corduroy road, dwindled into a path, with swamp on both sides. We were struck as we passed along with the great variety of berries edible and otherwise—blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, huckleberries, spikenard, dogwood, mountain ash, nightshade, etc. F. W. S. found a wild rose still in blossom. There were many fine young pines on this road, and presently we passed through a grove of larches—a tree which I have not elsewhere seen in this vicinity. A rough stable with a foot thick wall of brush half hidden under pines reminded me of the hut in Hardy's *Woodlanders*. We emerged at last about 5—half a mile below Ax's on the main Manistee Road in a swampy place very full of flowers—asters, closed blue gentians, cardinals, a variety of smart weed, and the rich heavy-odored lady's tress—which odor John remarked was not so very pleasant but there was lots of it."[12]

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[11] Journal, August 21, 1920.

[12] *Ibid.*, September 7, 1914.

A favorite excursion was to Bar Lake, which has its name from the narrow strip separating it from Lake Michigan. Here, in a landscape of somewhat desolate beauty, one could tether his canoe to the reeds and fish for perch or gather water lilies and blue water flowers, and afterward lie down in the hollow of a warm dune and read poetry or contemplate the surface of the lake after sundown, "very still, deep, full of pink and gold glamour, with a few pink clouds above."

The outing which Sherman came to recall with greatest fondness, because it had a certain tinge of adventure, was a canoe trip down the Manistee River in the late summer of 1925. The party, which included Mrs. Sherman, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hamilton, and Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Zeitlin, carried their canoes by motor truck about fifty miles inland, put them late one afternoon into a serene body of water, paddled peacefully till sunset, made themselves beds of springy and odorous balsam on the bank of the river and slept an idyllic sleep. On the second day, as they approached the neighborhood of a dam and the stream overflowed the country in all directions, it became somewhat of a problem to follow the channel and avoid striking the projecting snags. But the real fun began when the canoes, after a portage of only moderate difficulty, were launched below the dam. The river here was narrow with a swift current and whirling rapids. The deadheads that stuck out like tilted lances menacingly above the water were not nearly as formidable as those whose points terminated just beneath the surface. There was an element of real danger in the situation, as several members of the party were inexperienced canoeists and most of them not very vigorous swimmers. Paddles were lost several times but happily recovered. In the hazardous stages Sherman's nerves were at a high tension, but the difficulty once passed and the canoe floating smoothly, he quickly recovered his poise and gave himself to the enjoyment of the landscape, glancing at the reflections of light in the water or at herons perched on the limbs of dead trees, or singing out "Cardinal flowers on the left." That evening the party came to a log jam that completely obstructed the channel. In spite of the fatiguing toil of the day Sherman set grimly to pushing and hauling and tugging with the strength of a longshoreman and finally steered the canoes through the precarious opening. Dur-

ing the night, while the other campers slept with their feet turned toward the fire they had built by the side of a lonely road, Sherman lay awake on his back, watching the shooting stars, or moved about before the fire, absorbed in his moods and fancies. The third day, which was just as strenuous as the second, with Sherman insisting on doing the work of two men at an arduous portage, ended more comfortably in a roomy barn to which the company was admitted not without some misgivings on the part of the farmer's wife, while the last day brought the party peacefully to the mouth of the river. The trip was a tremendous test of Sherman's power of sustained physical exertion. It was some satisfaction to hear a boat-keeper in the later stages of the journey tell them that the part of the river they had traversed was not navigable by canoes, had not been for fully six years.

The soul of these expeditions would have been expressed by Sherman if he had ever developed the thoughts on blueberrying which he meditated for an *Atlantic* essay. Berries of all kinds are abundant in the vicinity. There were field strawberries not a mile distant. On the beach where he bathed raspberries could be gathered through the greater part of the summer, and blackberries with a kind of perfume and bouquet like spiced wine grew at the end of the path leading from his front door. But none of these had the power to stir him like the blueberry.

The blueberry was for him the virgin, the *belle sauvage* among berries. "The times when I have picked blueberries make a continuous season of weather—of open, of blue-color (blue gets in your eye after an hour of fast picking), of happy occupation with little things which completely suffice while they last." He would have told how one reached the blueberry patch by paddling in a canoe two or three miles to the south, perhaps noticing on the way the scarlet mountain ash in full splendor all along the bluff, and how crossing the dunes and winding up into a swamp, one proceeded to explore the ridges for the likeliest spot. Some bushes flaunt their berries, others hide them, but if you find a good one you may look for another good one in the vicinity. Blueberries have a high degree of individuality. Some are soft and pulpy, easily abraded, while others are hard and full. Certain pickers pass by the black, heavily pigmented variety, but it is a mistake, for their juice is good and sweet and they do not wither. In the course of the search one dived into little

hollows and came upon wintergreen, cardinal flowers, wild currants, and orchids. Then he would have described the art of picking, "teaching the thumb and middle finger to pick a round blue one out of a bunch else green and rosy," or "milking" when one came upon a clump with more berries than leaves and could set down the pail and pick with both hands. If you had a companion you did not care for, you picked with feverish haste to clear a patch before he (or she) came up, but if you had a sweetheart, you called to her "as a benevolent old cock is supposed to call the hen," and skirted and pecked around the edge of the clump and past it, while she picked the pail and kept exclaiming.

He would have discussed the question of eating while you pick and announced his own motto of "picking for picking's sake." Smoking is another matter, but chewing is doubtfully permissible. Good, honest men have been known to experiment with chewing on such occasions and to report that there is a kind of affinity between the pungency of wild Virginia leaf and the atmosphere of the blueberry patch, but it is clear that no one should chew who feels that it is wrong, advice which is confirmed by St. Paul's observation about meat that has been offered to idols. But more important even than tobacco is the problem of lunch. It should be a matter of firm principle to insist that there should be no blueberry expedition without a lunch. For one thing it safeguards the rights of the blueberries and reverences their remoteness. With improvements in traffic it is desirable to make conscious provision that some things should be kept remote. That is a lesson to be learned from our National Parks, where our ursine society is being vulgarized by hobnobbing with all that bourgeois, Ford-running rabble, and no self-respecting aristocrat of the Rockies is able to preserve his self-hood inviolate. Lunch also has a sentimental value and gives a sense of actuality. It should consist of cheese sandwiches and coffee. To bring canned stuff and salads as some people do is an abomination—like bringing toasters for the sandwiches—for it transforms the rite into a palatal orgy. What one wants is a harmony: just enough coffee to use the fire, and bread for toasting on forked birch twigs.

Then to lie on one's back under the poplars with eyes closed and with a sense of complete well-being, smoking and inhaling

the aromas of the place, yielding peacefully to the mood, catching the sound of droning nighthawks hunting over the crater of the swamp, watching the lights playing over the dead tree trunks and the dying pines and the little breezes ruffling the poplars. Then comes the whippoorwill and the somber notes of nightfall which are the signal for building up the fire. Later the trek over the dunes to the shore and the return in the canoes with subdued singing as the nearly full moon appears over the eastern *cîme indéterminée des forêts*.

Of all this the Philistine conclusion might be a pie or, at best, buns. But the true dénouement should be in a bowl of cream, in the cool early hours, at a quiet breakfast when you will put the bloom on the thoughts of the morning, fill each spoonful with memories, and tone up all the senses for the reception of a new day.

One summer the camp experienced a "mycological fervor," when, day after day, usually late in the afternoon, people would go out singly or in parties to scan the woods and fields for mushrooms and bring home, at first, "washtubs full of all manner of boletus and agaricus and pleurotus, bears-head, and corals," presently, however, abandoning most of the wood varieties and confining themselves to corals and puffballs and identifying two varieties of the latter that could be eaten safely. "It was good sport working through the tall corn after the small, starchy puffballs." There was a season when he chiefly hunted the varieties of flowers to be discovered in the region, made a herbarium and covered the walls of his cottage with crayon drawings, and another when he piled up innumerable boxes of insects. There were also trips early in the morning for trolling in the big lake or visits to the herring nets where one might have the privilege of hearing the old fisherman's picturesque swearing after his nets had been robbed, or watch the swooping of the gulls.

Bird life was a more continuous source of interest. There were crows flying past the bluff in the morning, partridges walking down wood roads, sandpipers tipping along the beach, ducks traveling over the swampy inland lakes, nighthawks and whippoorwills, occasionally an eagle, or a solitary loon crying far out in the water. But most interesting were the herons, which at first could be seen roosting, five or six at a time, in the

big hemlocks or stalking along the wet sands, but more usually "singly or in pairs at evening flying well out from the bank in rapid heavy flight with the long feet out behind; or sitting on Gilbert's fish-trap (occasionally a herring will have a nip out of his side), or now and then posed like a statue on the tip-top of a dead bare tree above the swamp—dirty grey."[13]

An atmosphere like this plainly called for a poet laureate, and Sherman early established his claim to the office by right of possession. There were frequent events that called for appropriate commemoration, as the occasion when a path was built to a point from which one could see Lake Onekama and Bar Lake, as well as the big lake.

ON THE OPENING OF THREE LAKES TRAIL

Behold and see, great Manitou,
Here where tangled wild-wood grew
Runs a pathway fit for men
To the hill-top from the Glen.
Help us now, thy children frail,
To guard for thee the Three Lakes Trail.

Keep this our walk from thorn and briar,
From tinder-wood and tongue of fire.
Here let the slimy snail not sleep
Nor emerald toad nor spider creep,
Nor ever from the ferny brake
Let wriggle forth the spotted snake.

But let the odorous springtime set
At every step a violet,
Let summer teach the gadding vine
Over the shady arch to twine,
And autumn from her leafy hold
Scatter her crimson and her gold.

Here let the brown br'er rabbit hop
And partridge with the bright fore-top,
And let the red squirrel frisk along
And the pretty wood-thrush sing her song,

[13] Journal, August, 1920.

And all our little children go
Barefoot with unscathèd toe.

And here let pompous picnic come,
With merry wives and husbands glum,
And lagging sons and trailing daughters,
And having viewed the shining waters
Let all go down the hill again
And eat their victuals in the Glen.

And let no war-cry pierce this vale
Threaded by the Three Lakes Trail,
But let all men and maidens sweet
Walk this way with friendly feet,
Round the wigwam campfires blend,
And smoke the peace-pipe till the end.

For moods of relaxation after toil there was a song that suggested more unbroken leisure and repose than the facts warranted.

"Kings may bustle to and fro,
Men in Dunewood don't do so—
Stretched beneath the quiet sky,
They watch the clouds go loafing by
In pure delight.
Idle, idle, idle, idle all day long;
Rest for men and maids is best,
Men and maids in Dunewood rest
From morn till night."

. . . . . .

But the song which came to be most intimately blended with the atmosphere of the place was the "Dunewood Serenade," a lyric of tender melancholy for which a musical setting was composed by Mrs. Scott. It consists of three stanzas, beginning:

"I hear o'er Dunewood a flight of wings
Go rushing by like frightened things,
And through the darkness they go crying,
O fly with us for time is flying

Now, now, now while the light
Of love's own star is high,
O seize on joy so brief, so bright,—
Like lightning in the summer night
The light of life goes by."

Sherman composed this song in July, 1914, and one short week later there was a tragic echo to its refrain when a message reached camp of the sudden death in Urbana of Thacher Guild, a character of rare courtesy and kindliness and gentleness. The news threw a pall of gloom over the little community he had helped to found: "It was a clear, soft, starry night, and his death shot through it like a falling star."[14] Sherman paid a deeply felt tribute to his gracious spirit in a memorial sketch.[15]

Besides being poet laureate Sherman acted as master of the revels, throwing himself with great zest into organizing the social life of the camp and its play. At the frequent beach suppers after the great bonfire was started, "with a piece of driftwood as a baton, he would stand in the circle of friends and with his deep bass voice lead the singing until voices failed the performers." He was also conspicuous in the more formal Sunday evening "sings" held in the only cottage that offered a piano. He was active in costume parties and dramatic performances. "He played with great spirit and effectiveness the part of Jacques in a beautiful production of *As You Like It*, staged in the deep woods perfectly adapted to that sylvan play. In a more frolicsome spirit he took the part of Juliet in a burlesque of *Romeo and Juliet*, in a make-up and costume that would have astonished an uninitiated onlooker." There were dances to the tunes of an old Victrola, with waltzes and Virginia reels for the older generation and one-steps and fox-trots for the up-to-date. There were athletic tournaments which included contests at tennis and pitching horseshoes. At the latter Sherman was particularly expert, taking great satisfaction in his frequent "ringers." Then there were the indoor amusements. Bridge, of course. It was in allusion to the spirit of Mrs. Battle that he nicknamed his cottage "The Battery." Sometimes it was the less popular sport of logomachy, "an ingenious word game that

[14]Letter to Jacob Zeitlin, July 27, 1914.
[15]*University of Illinois Alumni Quarterly*, October, 1914.

for many a night kept him and all who were willing to join him up until the early morning hours." There was also reading aloud from some work of Hardy or Kipling or Masefield, and very rarely something which he himself had just finished writing, announced on the bulletin-board in this fashion:

"For the information of Loving Friends and Interested Critics—If Any of Either Remain Since the Inauguration of My Courageous Series of Portraits:

"At Eight-fifteen this evening at the Battery I shall read an article on 'American Literary Tradition and Contemporary Movements in the U. S.' It is long and dull. Will require hardly less than two hours for reading and criticism. It is not entertaining. No man can tell what it is. But members of the above class will be welcomed. To sift the matter a nominal admission of $5 (five dollars) will be charged. Come to yawn and remain to pray for the end.

"Ever yours,
"CRITICUS (Painter of Women)."

This bulletin board was one of the important features of camp life. On it were posted not only all notices of communal activities but whatever anyone might wish to say of interest to the camp at large. Here Sherman pinned cartoons on the foibles of his neighbors, character sketches, birthday odes. Birthdays were never allowed to go by unremembered, and the years of the victim, even if feminine, were ruthlessly emphasized, as in this one:

RIDING THE RIDGE-POLE

A Sentimental Ditty Addressed to Ethel on Her Thirty-ninth Birthday

When Dunescot was a-building
  In the dear dead long ago,
And Youth retained its gilding
  And Dunewood had some "go,"
We thought the days too nimble,
  We thought the nights too swift;
In the town of Sidney Kimball,
  Our feet were light to lift.

Our feet were light—with never
A backward thought in mind,
They swept us on forever,
And left our youth behind.

We never dreamed in those days
That dance and song would cease,
And hands that gathered nosegays
Consent to shelling peas,
And mixing daily rations,
And tucking beds at night
For younger generations
Disporting in our sight—
Our bald spots idly mocking,
While they now wear the wreath,
And speak with comment shocking
Of our new hand-made teeth.

But in the shine and shimmer
Of Dunewood days of yore
We never had a glimmer
That we should reach two score.
Now, next the ridge-pole sitting
Where the gray roof slithers down,
I see you climb with your knitting
In your thirty-ninth birthday gown.
But I'm hanged if I'd ever suspect it—
You're looking perfectly fit—
I stand, or I sit here, corrected—
I'm dinged if you've altered a bit.

A life all of prunes and of virtue
And of staying in at night
Has forbid the years for to hurt you
And kept your red-gold bright.
And maybe we'll like the riding,
When we've taken the stirrup-cup,
And maybe we'll find the sliding
Is as "soft" as the climbing up.

It may be my sight will grow hoary,
Red locks, at a pace with you—
Anyhow, as James says in the story,
Ethel, "I'll see you through."

DON JUAN.

Sometimes, along with the congratulatory element, the poet might take occasion to insinuate a characteristic moral. Having for his neighbor one summer a physician whose sixty-seven years had not subdued an intense ardor for political reform and a sympathy with every project for social improvement, he addressed him in this set of verses, drawing two red flags at the head of the sheet and a bewhiskered face at the bottom.

To J. H. GREENE, M. D.

O Doctor, in your hours of ease
Strike up a light and cross your knees,
And think of this sagacious wheeze:
All mortal things, like this cigar,
Two ends or handles have, by gar,
And wisdom shows a wholesome blend
By seizing on the proper end;
One end is cool and safe and sweet,
The tother smokes and glows with heat.
One end brings peace and calm that lingers,
The tother nips and burns the fingers.
How shall the wise man learn to choose
The end that's fit and safe for use?
Take my advice—'tis quickly said:
Avoid the dangerous end that's *red!*
It burns and beckons simple folk,
And by and by goes up in smoke.
So shall the fiery Bolsheviks
At last expire like candle-wicks,
Leaving behind—the foolish riskers—
The odor of their burning whiskers;
For they in wisdom's parching drouth
Have put the *red* end in their mouth.

But you, if warned by faithful friend,
May mend your ways at sixty-seven,
Side-step the Old Nick's fiery end,
And light a fresh cigar in heaven.

It was not strictly necessary that there should be any external occasion. It must have been in response to an inner compulsion that he drew those portraits of women that he alludes to in the advertisement quoted above. Under a cloak of light mockery he slipped in the point of his serious satire, and if he did not make his subjects quite feel that the representations were "shameless and stark with veracity," he did put into them something besides cream and rose tints. By no means the most malicious but perhaps carrying more significance than the rest is the fourth in the series of five.

"Preraphaelite of the wilderness,
Madonnaesque esthete in exile,
Lover of purple, fine linen, stained glass, rich glooms, and gold splendors,
And music voluptuously sighing at twilight,
Or Gregorian chants of pale boys in dim lighted cathedrals,
You seek,
Or you think you are seeking,
The 'finer things of life;'
And the passion for beauty,
Hungry, romantic, corrosive,
Preys like a flame
On your heart.
Meanwhile the hands that would shine with Medicean jewels,
Dip rebellious in dish-water,
Or guide the indignant broom,
Or scrub the reluctant floor,
Or darn the revolting sock,
Or sew the seceding seam,
Or prepare the repugnant meal, with sp'een
That makes of fresh meats and savory herbs
A banquet of discontent, Medean and venomous,
And turns spring water vinaigrous.
You are the sort of woman

That lives in the day-after-tomorrow,
And treads violets under foot
For the weeds, perhaps, over the hill,
And wants to 'save up' for the good time she'll have at sixty,
And thinks that in London, or Paris, or Cairo,
Nobody is vulgar,
Or suffers from measles or toothache;
And imagines that Longfellow and Tennyson
Never spilled the coffee on a clean table-cloth,
Or lost their temper when people made the deuce of a racket;
And so you walk in a rose-colored cloud
Of imagination,
Which has the queer effect
Of turning the incarnadined magnificence of sunset to gray,
And making the silvery miracle of moonlight ghastly,
And the touch of flowers, and flower-soft hands of children, rough,
And sweet common things—friends, bread, sleep—bitter.
Madonna, there's nothing in Aristophanes livelier, funnier, more dramatic
Than a good domestic quarrel.
There's nothing more soothing in Beethoven
Than the recovery from it.
The 'finer things of life' lie close around us;
Wake, Preraphaelite, to the consciousness
That Heaven and Hell are in the Bosom of your next door neighbor,
And in Yours!"

Having spent his acerbity on their elders, Sherman had nothing but sweetness and tenderness left for the little children of the camp. To work for their amusement was one of his great delights. He planned their games, and once with a companion "worked two or three days in preparation for a search after buried treasure, suggested by the hulk of a sizeable vessel washed up on the beach by a storm. Its history was a matter of whispered wonder, until a bottle was discovered containing the story of the crew and their fate; then a second bottle was picked up telling where and how to find the treasure, buried in the sand. With all the high seriousness appropriate to the

occasion, Stuart led the children in the presence of the assembled population through the circumlocutions that ended where a buried keg was unearthed and pilfered of a wealth of trinkets, the collection of which had required hours of search in the nearest town." For these children he was constantly writing verses, among them being "The Slumber Song That the Mothers Sing to the Children in the Dunewood."

"Over the water is falling
The golden, gorgeous sun,
And the partridge mother is calling
Her chicks in Glenwood run.

"I see the late sheep scurry
Home across the sands;
Home to your mother hurry,
Little tired hands.

"I hear the small birds twitter,
'To-weet!' 'To-weet!' 'To-weet!'
Home to your mother skitter,
Little twinkling feet.

"Come, for the brown bats bicker;
The night wind stirs the leaves;
And the grey moths flicker, flicker
Under the Dunescot eaves.

"I see the white star winking
Over the hemlock tree;
And your periwinkle eyes are blinking
My own little widgetywee.

"I hear the Sand Man climbing
Up the Dunewood bluffs
And it helps my heavy rhyming
To hear how he puffs, puffs, puffs.

"Come, for the night is falling
On the Play House in the Glen,
And the old Sand Man is calling
For little maids and men.

"Sh! Sh!—Sh! Sh!—Let's see
Which midget hears the clearest:—
'May—ree!' 'Mar-ga-ret!' 'John-nee!'
That's for you, my dearest!"

This song with several others he incorporated in a children's story which he wrote one summer. "I shall probably," he said, "never have so much fun again writing, nor so delighted an audience as I have collected for this piece."[16] He even declared, in a moment of dissatisfaction with the world's courses, that if he were a member of the idle rich class he would never write another line of "criticism" but withdraw from a troubled universe and write fairy tales for children. He thought the story good enough for publication, but the publishers to whom he offered it, while appreciating its "imaginative" and "literary quality," had "invincible doubts regarding its commercial value and its appeal to the child." "Of course," Sherman observed, "they are hopelessly wrong, like all publishers, or else just polite; for the tale has no literary merit, but does take the child. . . . I have no sense of shame at all; but rather take pleasure in having committed a folly."[17] To offset the lack of enterprise in the publishers Sherman prepared four holograph copies with his own hand and presented one to each of the three children. The title page of this extremely limited edition reads as follows:

HOW THE LITTLE SOULS SAW THE SAND MAN
WITH OTHER SURPRISING ADVENTURES
THAT BEFELL THE CHILDREN
IN DUNEWOOD

BY

STUART P. SHERMAN

Little Souls' Edition. Privately published for
them by the Author, and distributed
From his Residence at 1016 Nevada Street,
Urbana, Illinois
1915.

His feeling for these three children shows itself again in the delightful letter that he addressed to one of them who had arrived in Dunewood while he was still sweltering in Urbana.

[16]Letter to Jacob Zeitlin, July 27, 1915.

[17]Letter to P. E. More, October 27, 1915.

(To Margaret Guild, aged 5)

[July, 1915.]

DEAR MARGARET:

John showed me a very interesting letter from you several days ago. Some time he expects to answer it. But he cannot work very hard now, for it is vacation, and he is very busy resting and taking his piano lessons, which occupy him at least fifteen minutes every day.

Your uncle Frank says that you have a bad cough. That is very sad. John has a cough, too; and whenever it starts he thinks of the poor chicken in the song that sneezed so hard with the whooping cough that he sneezed his head right off:—but he put it on again and lived happy ever after.

Of course little girls with a cough have to be especially careful to come in a-skipping when it rains; to go to bed very early at night; to take their medicine without squirming; and to do just precisely, exactly, perfectly and persistently what their dear mothers tell them to do.

Did you know that in the summer time Santa Claus takes his vacation, too, and rests his reindeer, and lets them run out in the meadows and play? Where do you suppose he goes in the summer? Well, someone told me that he has a tent in the woods somewhere not very far from the Playhouse in Dunewood. And all day long he wanders around among the hemlocks with his little red note book in his hand to see if the little boys and girls in Dunewood are being just as good as little mice. So I guess you had better be a very, *very*, *very* good Mouse. Don't you think so? . . .

I hope you are taking good care of the little snakes in the raspberry patch; and of the partridges in Glenwood run; and of the ferns in Drury Lane; and of the harebells and the tiger-lilies. It is very late now; and I must go and light the ruby beacon, and bring my sheep home from the Lake.

Sweet dreams; good-night;
Sweet dreams till morning light.

THE SANDMAN.

CHAPTER XVI

SABBATICAL LEAVE

IN 1916 Sherman was granted a sabbatical leave. The members of his department gave him a send-off at an outing which was in the nature of an informal family gathering, with "tributes" half improvised, in verse and prose, whose outward light-heartedness did not conceal the genuineness of the affection which inspired them. The demonstration was a little overwhelming to Sherman, but after a few days he recovered from it and sent a handsome acknowledgment to all who had taken part in it.

June 3, 1916.

Perhaps I need not tell you again the pleasure that I felt in undergoing your admirable epitaphs and in receiving your beautiful gift[1] on the banks of the Salt Fork last Saturday. Through your ministrations I have passed by an euthanasia into the shadowy half-life of a sabbatical year; and whenever I walk among the academically half-dead, I shall glance, like an Etruscan ghost, at my sacred relic, and shall seem to hear your far-off voices saying: "Watch your step!"

What I did not at all express on that delightful occasion is the deep gratification of regarding this special act of kindness as a token of the spirit of coöperation and good-fellowship which has characterized our department in the past, and which, I hope and believe, will continue to be one of its cherished traditions. I can wish for nothing better than to return to a staff which is determined to be distinguished in the University for its concerted progress in teaching and scholarship, and for the harmony and mutual helpfulness of its members.

The summer and early fall of 1916 was spent at Dunewood in writing the book on Matthew Arnold for Mr. W. D. Howe's

[1] A gold watch.

"How to Know Him" series, facetiously referred to as "Howe's How in Literature." This series was avowedly meant for the uninitiated and its plan called for a liberal use of selections with a certain amount of connecting biography and comment. Some of the contributors did not escape the danger of "writing down" which was involved in these conditions. This, however, was not a danger which was ever likely to befall Sherman. As in the case of Franklin, he chose his subject because of its congeniality with the temper of his own mind and of something even more than that. In Matthew Arnold he found the same impulses, the same emotional crises and spiritual problems, the same conflicts of temperament and reason that he had experienced or was experiencing in his own breast, and he also found what seemed to him the triumph over difficulties through the exercise of control and character. The first chapter reads at many points like an avowal of personal troubles or personal aspirations. The description of Arnold as "a thoroughly organized character," "the most vigorously disciplined of men, the most coherently purposeful of writers," clearly enough represents the direction of Sherman's own effort. When he quotes Arnold to the effect that "we can 'only acquire any solidity of shape and power of acting by narrowing and narrowing our sphere, and eliminating the number of affections and interests which continually distract us while young, and hold us unfixed and without energy to mark our place in the world,'" he is but using another's words to set forth his own central principle about the formation of character.[2] Did Arnold, we wonder, any more than Sherman feel "the conflict of aristocratic and democratic impulses, of traditional belief and dogma with scientific knowledge, of romantic inclination with classical

[2]The process of making a choice out of the many diverse possibilities of character that are open to any man is thus described by William James: "Such different characters may conceivably at the outset of life be alike possible to a man. But to make any one of them actual, the rest must more or less be suppressed. So the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully, and pick out the one on which to stake his salvation. All other selves thereupon become unreal, but the fortunes of this self are real. Its failures are real failures, its triumphs real triumphs, carrying shame and gladness with them. . . . Our thought, incessantly deciding, among many things of a kind, which ones for it shall be realities, here chooses one of many possible selves or characters, and forthwith reckons it no shame to fail in any one of those not adopted expressly as its own."

discipline and conviction, of emotion with intelligence?" Perhaps Sherman did not feel the religious dilemma as keenly, but the other conflicts are at the very base of that uncertainty about which his critical friends were admonishing him. We can understand precisely what is in his mind, when he observes that as Arnold "advances toward the truth, keeping step with his convictions, his innermost self turns again and again, like the homesick heart of a soldier, to bid a reluctant farewell to his sympathies." The cheerful serenity which is the reward of those who have happily resolved the struggle in their own hearts was never to be won by Sherman, but since he knew the struggle, he could admire, perhaps envy, in Arnold "a wholesome tranquillity about the universe, a certain humility about his own function in it, and just that touch of superiority to transitory things—to the passing show—that enables a man of his rigorous social sense and fundamental seriousness to do his duty lightly and even gaily." "The union of a graceful and debonair manner with a grave and sustained purposefulness" was just the ideal which he had shortly before projected in "The Gaiety of Socrates." There is a not unimportant personal parallel suggested also by Sherman's remark on Arnold's "undeniable love of influence and reputation." If this were imputed to him as a weakness, Sherman would have justified it in his own case as in that of Arnold on the ground of its value for the task he was trying to perform.

The identity of purpose in the two men may be seen from the ease with which one can apply to Sherman the expressions he uses in defining the aims of the other, saying of him, for instance, that the main task of his life was "making aristocratic tastes prevail in a world which was becoming rapidly democratic," or that "in an unsettled epoch of English thought he found a central position, and sharply defined his attitude toward education, society, politics, and religion," and so became "a suggestive guide to a man who is trying to discover what he ought to think on most subjects which concern him." Again when we read that Arnold's object as a critic was "the incorporation of ideas in character and their expression in the conduct of life," we have no difficulty in recognizing a statement of Sherman's own attitude.

The book made its appearance in the spring of 1917 and

among the first to receive a copy was Mr. P. E. More, who wrote to Sherman that he enjoyed every page of it, and made some interesting observations on the religious restrictions of Arnold's nature and on the similarity of the trend of his own ideas to Arnold's.

"On the whole," he wrote, "you seem to place Matthew even higher than I do, and that is pretty high. Possibly you do not feel the religious restrictions of his nature—perhaps rather of his age—as keenly as I do. But your estimate of him as a poet and critic seems to me eminently sound and just. I do not know when I have been so impressed by the clarity and justice of a biographical study. And the tone of the book is well calculated to do good to a large number of readers who might be repelled by the slightest note of provocative superiority. . . . One thing bothered me. I have not read much in Arnold for years, and now as I see his ideas brought together, it seems to me that most of my own critical writing has been little more than an effort to say a second time what has already been said better the first time—*pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.*"[3] Sherman's reply with its suggestion of Mr. More having served "more or less as a living model for the portrait of Arnold," is equally interesting.

(*To P. E. More*)

500 West 112th Street, New York,
May 1, 1917.

My dear More:

Your prompt reading of my book was the last word in the way of a touching compliment. If you are reasonably well satisfied with it, let the heathen rage. The fact is I am about as hard to please with my own work as any one extant; and you, I think, are a little harder! *There* was the great zest of writing for your editorial eye. . . .

With regard to religion—your feeling of the religious restrictions of Arnold and his age is doubtless due to your greater religious experience. I recognize these restrictions with my intelligence, but to tell the truth I do not much feel them with my heart. Arnold gives me as much religion as I can receive;

[3]April 24, 1917.

and he does not give anything that I cannot receive in my more lucid intervals. If I never wavered in my faith in his not excessively sympathetic Eternal, I should feel, from a religious point of view, eminently "respectable." I do not rise from his level to "the effusion of Christianity, its relieving tears" or to mystical insights of my own; but sink when I leave his level to a kind of universal nihilism, which is not respectable at all. Those who live "in the spirit" probably don't need Arnold; but for those who rather habitually feel that life

> "Though bearable, seems hardly worth
> This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth,"

he affords exactly the stimulus necessary to sustain them in "keeping up appearances."

I don't see why you should be troubled by the thought that you have been saying what Arnold said. Is that not inevitable for those who work in the great tradition? Take the case of a Christian clergyman. Should he be troubled by the reflection that the founder of his religion had laid down all the leading principles? Arnold's virtue is in the application to his own time of a body of doctrine nearly all of which he had inherited. What is it that you yourself have said about keeping the past as a living force in the present?

Perhaps some of the similarity which you felt was due to the fact that you were, quite without your knowledge, serving more or less as a living model for the portrait of Arnold which I attempted to paint. In the biographical chapter I was quite conscious that my interpretation of certain phases of Arnold's character was being subtly influenced by my studies for the More biography! Since you find this work "clear" and "just," will you recant now your rejection of my services as Boswell? . . .[4]

Professor Babbitt made the book the occasion of a long article in the *Nation*,[5] greeting it as "the first good book" on Arnold and recognizing Sherman as a convinced Arnoldian. "Professor Sherman," he said, "not only joins to unmistakable brilliancy a concern for standards but he is getting at his stan-

[4]See p. 309.

[5]August 2, 1917.

dards in a thoroughly modern and positive way. We may hope that in this respect he is a precursor, one of those sharp-shooters of whom Arnold speaks who go in advance of 'the elephantine main body' and prepare the future."

The reviews in general were nearly all appreciative; some were enthusiastic. A number of them commented on the great superiority of the volume to others in the series, the Kansas City *Star* making editorial retraction of some jibes it had leveled against the title of the series.[6] Prof. M. C. Otto in the Chicago *Dial*[7] was reserved. But though he did not like what seemed to him "a somewhat superior attitude toward 'middle-class virtues' and 'the people'" (this was not a sin that was frequently charged against Sherman) and "an irritable manner with those who are still young enough to find fault with Arnold ('younger critic,' it would seem, is Mr. Sherman's damn)," and though he disagreed with Sherman's "easy method of solving the religious problem by moving God from metaphysics to experience," with his interpretation of Arnold's character as "winsome," and with his tendency, "in common with all those who bow the knee to Pope Arnold, to talk about eternal values as a matter of course," yet he thought the book on the whole was an admirable study and singled out for special praise the excellent discussion, in the fifth chapter, of educational values and of the warfare between the sciences and the humanities, as represented by Spencer and Arnold. He might have added the equally valuable sixth chapter with its acute analysis of Arnold as a mediator between the positions of Carlyle and Mill. Sherman was a little piqued at Professor Babbitt's reference to this chapter as "clever but unconvincing," and quoted to him Mr. More's opinion of it as the best thing in the book. "I myself," he added, "looked upon it as possibly 'contributive.'"[8] The reviewer in the *New Republic* was hardly felicitous in observing that Sherman removed Matthew Arnold "from the interests of the young and the anxiously questioning" and that he failed to "point out with the vividness of the here and now just how Matthew Arnold reconstructs, just how his

[6]September 16, 1917.
[7]June 14, 1917.
[8]August 9, 1917.

message renews itself with each generation,"[9] but the prize for critical discernment and elegant expression should go to the *Independent* which said that "in his dissertation, *Matthew Arnold*," Sherman "was braced by diligence both in the collecting of minor material and in the weaving of it into a predetermined disquisitive pattern to square with an inherently unsympathetic attitude toward the poet and essayist."[10]

In the midst of his work on Arnold Sherman paused occasionally to strike a blow in behalf of Woodrow Wilson, of whose character and policies he had become a strong admirer. In an article in the *Nation* on "The Three Candidates"[11] he opposed to Roosevelt, the barbarian of genius, and to Hughes, the uninspired legalist, the personality of Wilson as the civilian of genius, "with a sense of the democracy of nations, with a great and splendid vision of a civilized world." He also spoke for his faith in a letter to Professor A. H. Daniels.

". . . I am for Wilson for a large number of reasons set forth by democrats and others. Also for these reasons, as follows: *First*, I consider him a *bigger* man than Hughes with broader vision and more open mind. *Secondly*, I consider him a far more *civilized mind* than T. R., who is the reality behind the show in Hughes's case;—in fact, he strikes me as the most civilized mind that has appeared prominently in public life in my time; and I think he will do more, far more, to civilize the public mind and conscience of America than any one else in sight. *Thirdly*, (this is closely related to Number 2) he has persuasion, charm, elevation of style, genuine high quality of thought and feeling in his public utterances. Of these qualities, which are really some of the marks of greatness in a public man, I don't find one iota, one scintilla, in Hughes. Though I am 'traditionally' a Republican, I pinned my faith to Wilson, as you know, a good while ago; and it has not been seriously shaken since. But, sir, when Hughes's speech of acceptance came out, I fairly laughed aloud at the superiority of the other man. Stale, flat, unprofitable, and absolutely *wooden*, to my ear, was the sound of its dull thud as it fell to the ground. Hughes has no doubt a good set of brains, but no more genius than is in an egg. As

[9]October 27, 1917.

[10]July 14, 1917.

[11]October 26, 1916.

between him and T. R., give me T. R., for though T. R. has altogether too much of the Teutonic savage in him to suit my anæmic taste, he has barrels of crude genius in him. Well, Wilson has genius, too, and of the refined quality; there is a certain French element in the man's mind, a certain genuine urbanity, amenity, and distinguished intellectual quality which I think are very good for the American people, and which they will learn to value more and more when they get over their appetite for the coarser fare to which they have been chiefly accustomed in the past. . . .[12]

From Michigan Sherman went to New England, performing incidentally the duty of representing Illinois at a Yale pageant. This he described in a not very official letter to President James, in which he piquantly assumed the air of a confirmed Westerner.

(*To President E. J. James*)

Dorset, Vermont, November 20, 1916.

My dear President James:

I have long been troubled with the thought that I ought to make some official report of my representation of the University at New Haven. The difficulty is of course that there is nothing "official" to report. On the one hand I had no instructions from you; and on the other hand there were no formal rites or ceremonies in New Haven. On Sunday morning, indeed, our hosts informed us that President Hadley would preach in one of the churches on the Green, and they gave us our choice between hearing him and taking a canoeing trip with them on the Quinnipiac River; but they threw the weight of their own influence and advice so uncompromisingly into one scale that the choice was merely nominal. Of this part of my duties I can only report that the fried mushrooms were excellent.

The pageant on Saturday was impressive by reason of the great number of performers rather than by anything especially dramatic in the representation. The Bowl is wonderfully well adapted for the rapid and easy handling of a great crowd of spectators and performers and one became engrossed in the

[12]October 1, 1916.

technique of entrances and exits. The display of color in various scenes was admirable. For one familiar with Yale and New Haven history and traditions there were doubtless many pleasant thrills of recognition at the revival of historic incidents; but to an unimpregnated Western mind like mine there was much of "inexplicable dumb show." In confidence, speaking with fellow Illinoisians, I say that there is more of æsthetic sensation in one of our Spring Maypole dances in Urbana than in the massed color at the bottom of the Bowl. By bringing in our local Grand Army Men, our fire company, our artillery company, and a few troops of the brigade, with a local mayor or two, we could duplicate their performance! But I am struck with the fact that mere numbers have very little to do with the total effect of the spectacle; and that our open field is a much better place for this sort of spectacle than the bottom of a pit like the Yale Bowl. . . .

I offer my congratulations on your new grandchild with best wishes for its prosperous voyage through the choppy waters of infancy. I have just made my first acquaintance with five of my own nephews and nieces, which has quickened my interest in "the younger generation." On Wednesday of this week we return to Williamstown, Mass., to wrestle for a couple of weeks with Henry James. Then we expect to go to New York and set earnestly to work on Book No. 2. No. 1 is now in the hands of the publisher. If your Teutonic friends would keep their U-boats on the other side of the ocean, we should feel a pleasanter anticipation about going to England. At present going around Cape Cod seems a bold adventure, though the U. S. gunboats have so far proved efficient life-savers.

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

He spent some weeks in Dorset and Williamstown in reading and recreation and reached New York on December 1st.

"You may be amused to hear," he wrote to Professor Daniels, "that I spent two days last week with a Winchester rifle—deer hunting on the mountains west of my uncle's farm. The day before I went up a fine buck was slain, and the day after I came down two more were brought down in the same territory. I had a fine hunt, grew quite excited pursuing one set of deer track for about four hours over the mountain tops. But the only

deer I have seen were hanging by the heels under a tree and in the wagon of more fortunate hunters. However, I am a practical man as well as a sportsman! and have accordingly negotiated for a quarter of the buck which my rival has laid by the heels, and my family shall eat venison before the week is out.

"I have finished all the writing for which I have books in this rural retreat, and on Wednesday of this week we purpose to return to Williamstown for a couple of weeks with the college library. Then we shall go to New York. Meanwhile I've been enjoying the village stock of biographies: Morley's *Gladstone*, Trevelyan's *Garibaldi*, and Thayer's *John Hay*. By the way, have you read the Hay? If you haven't, you should; for Hay is a letter-writer and a critic of delightfully Gallic (from gall) tang. You would enjoy him thoroughly; so would Mrs. Daniels. But you've probably read him. . . ."[13]

The circumstances of his settling in New York are related in the course of one of his letters to Mr. More, written from an apartment in the neighborhood of Columbia:

"My family and I arrived in this strange city about the first of this month in a state of unconcern about the morrow, like that attributed to the lilies of the field. We attempted on the advice of friends (?) to strike root in an apartment not far from here, in which the air was burdened day and night with darkness and the shriek of the Elevated rounding a curve. For some fifteen mortal days we endured our fate like incarcerated tigers. Then we folded our tents and stole away to the address above, which is bounded on the east by the Cathedral, on the north by, I think, an Old Folks' Home, and on the other sides by fairly quiet courts; and we are now about to begin to acquire a taste for the city. I seem dimly to recall a suggestion of yours that we hibernate in Princeton. In fact I used to hint to Mrs. Sherman from time to time that we make an expedition of enquiry in that direction. She unhappily gathered in reports that the place was occupied solely by members of the I. R. C., and was no place for professors on half-pay. Furthermore, we both had more or less of a sense that having dwelt so long in what Allan Nevins calls the 'academic shades,' and that too in a remote wilderness, we ought to subject ourselves to the discipline of 'life,'

[13]November 20, 1916.

of the 'real' life which roars and reverberates and speaks the German and Yiddish languages between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue."[14]

Sherman lived in New York for six months and enjoyed the opportunities for the personal contacts which his two summers in the city had not afforded. He renewed associations with his friends of the *Evening Post* and Columbia University—Mr. Ogden, Mr. Strunsky, Mr. Villard, Professor Thorndike. He met for the first time Mr. Holt, Professor Trent, and W. C. Brownell; and Mr. More at Princeton was not too far away for an occasional exchange of visits. He was a frequent guest at the Authors and the Century clubs, sometimes staying in the society of these congenial figures till two o'clock in the morning. In "An Imaginary Conversation with Mr. P. E. More" he has distilled the essence of their talk, showing Professor Trent and Mr. Holt and Mr. More, "confirmed Tories all three, joining in an amicable but heated altercation on the merits of Milton and Defoe, or harmoniously discussing, judging, and gossiping over the 'wits' of tavern and coffee-house whom Mr. More has gathered into his latest volume: first, Beaumont and Fletcher, Halifax, Mrs. Behn, Swift, Pope, Lady Mary, Berkeley, the Duke of Wharton, Gray; and, then, more summarily, those golden bugs, those 'decadent fellows' who wore the green carnation and sipped absinthe for coffee between the reign of Wilde and the reign of G. B. Shaw. It is good literary talk—better is not to be heard in these degenerate days. It is talk now grave, now gay, richly allusive and erudite and deliciously seasoned with malice—'at every word a reputation dies.'" He goes on to point out what "a lurking whig or a modern Democrat or a Romanticist" would find less to his liking in this conversation—their "dreadful Calvinistic accord" as to man's natural predisposition to evil, their suspicions and derogatory speech concerning the *mobile vulgus*, and their failure, after the manner of all militant classicists, "to recognize the 'grand style' in Shakespeare."[15] To offset this excessive Toryism he had an opportunity, at the home of Mr. Simeon Strunsky, to listen to aggressive socialistic doctrine from the mouth of Mr. English Walling. Provided that the talk was of excellent quality the divergence

[14]December 24, 1916.

[15]*Americans*, pp. 322–324.

of ideas did not detract from his pleasure in it. It is natural that he should have found a special satisfaction in his meetings with Mr. Brownell, with whose outlook he was *en rapport* from the beginning. In the elder critic's treatment of Sherman there was a fine courtesy and respect which leveled the distinction of age between them. Sherman heard him read his essay on "Standards" at the Century Club and told him it was the cleverest paper against cleverness he had ever listened to. Mr. Brownell repaid the compliment by saying that he had gathered strength for his delivery by fixing his eyes mainly in Sherman's direction.

There were occasions and groups which might have provoked his impulse to satire had he not kept it carefully in check. An assembly of twittering female poets put a severe strain upon his composure, but he reflected that they were all "good honest souls" and that each of the middle-aged and elderly enthusiasts had *something*. Toward the better known figures whom he saw at the annual dinner of the Poetry Society his attitude was detached rather than unsympathetic. He noted Markham "with his long blackish-grey locks combed back over his ears, his glowing eyes under shaggy brows, and his butternut skin [looking] like a reduced and contracted version of Walt Whitman"; Amy Lowell, "huge, humorous, mannish, dressed in black, winking and smiling at the audience and puckering in and out the corners of her mouth," tossing a small purse into the air as she spoke; Masters, disappointingly colorless and quite put in the shade by his discoverer, Marion Reedy, with large round smoked glasses, a large jaw, and a certain impressive massiveness "as of a black bull-frog," orating "to left, to center, and to right with slowly enunciated sentences and in a weighty manner about social conditions underlying great poetry."

What irritated Sherman most was being compelled to listen to the unedifying conversation of a class dinner or to the cant that one hears at a gathering of alumni. He was entirely sickened by the demand that —— should produce "gentlemen and leaders of men," coming as it did "from that champagne and cocktail addled crowd of ill-behaved, thoughtless young jingoes and coupon-cutters." Nor does this indicate inability to relax to the familiar level of the plain man. Sherman did relax, even though, not quite in the spirit of the tired business man, he imported into his relaxation a touch of transforming poetry.

It is not likely that "the candid Annette" had many admirers who were more appreciative.

". . . In the evening I went to the Lyric with Carl to see Annette Kellerman in the *Daughter of the Gods*—a queer hodge-podge of Sultans and harems and witches and gnomes and good fairies and battles and burning cities—held together by the appearance of the candid Annette in her own person, and often in nothing else, swimming and diving in the surf of the Sandwich Islands, sporting with mermaids, sliding down cascades, swinging in vine ladder over a deep pool, with hands and feet tied, tossed upon rocks, thrown to crocodiles who are transformed to swans as she strikes the water, diving from prison towers, fighting in shining armor, sold as a slave in the market, diving under swimming pursuers, etc. A wonderful statuesque figure—her limbs as firm as marble, and as proudly revealed. The absence of languor, the energy and strong motion of the creature, the setting of the sea, curiously removed the expectable sensual sting of such a naked apparition. Her scenes frequently recalled classic pictures and sculptured images—as Anadyomene, Ariadne, and the winged Nike, except that she at no time was clothed as the latter. She was particularly stunning in the scene in which she is thrown to the alligators or crocodiles."

At the end of December Sherman ran down to Princeton, where the Modern Language Association was in session, saw some friends, and had a brief visit with Mr. More. Princeton itself always affected him as an extremely un-American place. "That quaint little imitation English city," he called it, "striving so bravely amid the New Jersey oil refineries to be a home of lost causes and to dream, under the Cleveland memorial tower, like the Oxford of 1830."[16] He was impressed by the absence of any sign or signal of nationality in Proctor Hall with its Italian and English pictures and its Latin inscription. About a month later he went down with Mrs. Sherman to spend a week-end at Mr. More's house, and in the society and conversation there his spirit revelled. To sit in the scholar's library and talk about Plato, about Socrates and the idea of justice, about Rousseau and Sainte-Beuve and Professor Babbitt, about Shake-

[16] *Americans*, p. 327.

speare's humanism and about Goethe, about critical form and about the war messages of Wilson was for Sherman a true holiday of the intellect. There was sufficient clash of opinions to lend some excitement to the interchange. Sherman was intent on vindicating his humanistic interpretation of Shakespeare, his view of the "fascinating duality" of Rousseau's personality and influence, his belief in the sincerity and high-mindedness of Wilson's utterances. He also urged Mr. More to go at least halfway to "the people" with his Plato, quoting at him the passage in which Matthew Arnold describes the great men of culture as those who have a passion for carrying the best knowledge and the best ideas of their time *from one end of society to the other*. This was a favorite and important element in Sherman's philosophy and accounts for much in the direction of his development. Only a week before at the Century Club, when Mr. Henry Rutgers Marshall had spoken apologetically of his appearance in *Vanity Fair*, he had argued that what the country needed was a good deal more of that sort of stooping to the popular medium on the part of the real "high-brows." He was pleased, too, at what he thought were signs of deliberate consideration for the public in the latest work of Mr. Brownell.

At dinner one evening Sherman was seated next to Mrs. Gerould. Since he had already exchanged thrusts with her in public he thought he was now expected to quarrel with her for the benefit of the company. Whether or not he desired to meet expectations, the line which he chose did not prove to be provocative. In parting he took Mrs. Gerould's hand warmly, said he was very happy to have met her and hoped that his sins had been forgiven. The altogether gracious reply was that if he had sinned he should be forgiven. In the midst of a conversation Mrs. Sherman suggested that her husband should undertake the rôle of Boswell to their host, at which the latter exclaimed, "Heaven preserve me from such a Boswell! I want one with a less malicious finger."

All in all, while Princeton did not conform to Sherman's ideal of democracy, it did not fail to affect him at certain susceptible points, properly acknowledged in a letter several weeks later:

"It is high time to say that we are still enjoying our visit at your baronial manor. It will make a great chapter in the Bos-

wellian narrative which Mrs. Sherman is expecting me to produce! As you know I have long been under the spell of such members of your circle as I was acquainted with. I should hate to say how many new flames have been kindled. For instance, your sister, Miss More, is a very persuasive personality; if I had heard her talk for ten minutes longer I should have lost all my dreadful popular sympathies. Then Mrs. Mather on Sunday afternoon made me all but fall in love with the clanking of swords and the smell of powder—she glowed so with the fine ardor of battle. To the daughter whom you did not name in honor of William Sharp I quite lost my heart—on the spot. I send her my very particular regards, which you will use your discretion about transmitting."[17]

Shortly after his return from Princeton Sherman experienced what he was pleased to regard as a lapse from grace by speaking before the Cosmopolitan Club of New York. "I mark this with a red letter," he wrote to F. W. Scott, "because as you know I have moral, intellectual and religious objections to addressing clubs of women."[18] He shared the sin with such well-known persons as Henry Osborn Taylor, James Harvey Robinson, and his college friend, Max Eastman, and his audience included G. P. Putnam, Henry Holt, and Walter Lippmann. As usual, he did more than the occasion probably demanded, his careful preparation standing in relief against the offhand remarks of the other speakers. "I was abashed, as I listened to your amazing little paper, that you should have taken us so seriously," wrote Mrs. G. P. Putnam, the president of the club.[19] Sherman sent an account of this occasion to Mr. More.

(*To P. E. More*)

500 West 112th Street, New York,
March 1, 1917.

My dear More:

As more or less your substitute at the Cosmopolitan Club, I have long had it in mind to render you some account of the

[17]March 1, 1917.
[18]March 10, 1917.
[19]February 16, 1917.

performance. It is certain that I represented you but ill. Mrs. Putnam in a witty introductory speech sketched out the probable line of each of the four speakers. Then J. H. Robinson arose and declared that everything said in the world up to date was "bunk." H. O. Taylor next rose and asserted that some things are beneath the level of common intelligence—among them, Christian Science. Max Eastman then prophesied against those who have prevented the equalization movement from reaching the economic field. (Henry Holt told me after the meeting that he wanted to ask Max about the high cost of plumbing.) Mrs. Putnam had slated me for a discourse on naturalism as the root of all evil. But I, in a fit of perversity, spoke in behalf of "democratic individualism"—instancing as the greatest present peril to the race the pressure upon an imperfect individuality exerted by a precocious, spiritually imperfect, but intensely organized nationality; and saying some good words for the soft-handed, slow-footed God of democratic peoples. . . . All this was no doubt dreadfully untimely, and superficially, perhaps, inconsistent with my more or less Academic line.

It was pleasant to observe how politely the Club and its visitors listened to everything that was said to them. Robinson, for example, told them that he was "agin" everything "sacred." One good lady did, however, rise to enquire mildly whether he wouldn't make an exception or two. I carried my message with a fearful heart, for I had just been hearing G. P. Putnam and his friends shouting for a dictator and anticipating the government in declaring war on the Barbarians. But all complexions were represented at the meeting, and even at the dinner over which Mrs. Littell presided. With Max Eastman and Walter Lippmann on one side it had a rather *Massy* and *New-Republicky* flavor.

But dropping this curious affair, I ask you whether the course of contemporary affairs does not, theoretically at least, force a thoughtful person to reconsider whether the fear of too much government is not the beginning of wisdom, and whether the very inefficiency of democracy may not in the long run prove its salvation. No one will listen to such idle thoughts till after we are through our scrape with these insane and bedeviled Teutons; but the very trouble there is that a governmental

board of experts has been trying to make men into political mechanisms, and it has driven them mad.

A week later Sherman went to Amherst to deliver a lecture on the Clyde Fitch Foundation, taking Matthew Arnold for the subject of his discourse. During this stay he was a guest of the Meiklejohns and was entertained at dinner by Professor and Mrs. Whicher, at whose house he met Robert Frost. With Frost he talked of Walt Whitman and of the possibility of embracing the country in a work of art, an idea which was obnoxious to the poet's belief in natural and spontaneous expression. "I think you would rather take to him," was the opinion he expressed to Mr. More; "clear-eyed, placid brow, slightly Yankee twang, and nothing 'squashy' about him. I took the liberty of telling him that you did not consider him altogether depraved; and this pleased him and increased his eagerness to meet you. He, on the other hand, took great satisfaction in that stern article of yours on Tagore."[20]

Meanwhile the war was making its relentless approaches to the American shore, and Sherman's heart sickened at the prospect. In church one Sunday he heard a sermon on the Christianity of fighting under proper circumstances, in which the preacher explained that patience was a vice and that turning the other cheek meant that one shouldn't lose his temper too quickly. He saw a troop of uniformed Boy Scouts, after being blessed as Christian soldiers, march out of the church with flags flying and singing hymns, and he thought gloomily of how the old traditional alliance of Church and State, of sword and cross, was being resanctified. The spectacle of the city streets after war was declared moved him to a sardonic bitterness, apparent even under the restraint of a matter-of-fact description.

". . . New York in these days is quite visibly buckling on her armor. Khaki is to be seen on many street corners. Flags fly in every block. Preachers expound every Sabbath the militancy of Christ, and denounce O. G. Villard. The Yankees have dislodged the Huns from the five German vessels at 135th St.—the occasional objective of our afternoon walk. Guards patrol up and down the fire engine house and the water-station around

[20]March 1, 1917.

the corner. Woman-suffragists and chorus-girls recruit and harangue from wagons and automobiles in 42nd Street. Bell-boys and waiters drill on the roof of the Waldorf-Astoria. In our family, John is naturally belligerent. He says that if the Germans come up to the fire escape I am to be Horatius at the bridge and *he* will go out on the landing by the window and kick them into the street as they mount. As it is five stories down, the descent would be hazardous. He also expresses the pious hope that the city will be shelled by the raiders—expresses this with manifest glee and anticipation. As Mrs. Frank J. Mather says, 'Every man is a fighting cock'. . . "[21]

But it was the cold-bloodedness of the realists and the visions of the idealists looking beyond the immediate horror and suffering that wrought in Sherman a mood of almost anguished pessimism. That horror and that suffering his imagination would not let him escape from, and its meaning came particularly near to him from a painful illness through which his mother was then passing. There is very little "tough-mindedness" betrayed in his letter to Mr. More after the semicentenary dinner of the *Nation:*

"I much enjoyed the *Nation* dinner. The speeches on the whole were very much superior to most of the after-dinner efforts I have heard, and the whole programme 'went together.' I seldom object to the length of a speech as long as the speaker has something that he wants to say and is making progress with the delivery of it. John Bassett Moore's address, however, affected me very much apparently as it affected Villard. When our leaders declare that after the war we must continue to make military preparations and greater than before, my nihilism blackens the entire firmament. If the human race is in for repetitions of the performance of the last two years I am ready to say: Let the fighting go on; let procreation cease; let wise men consult together to put an end speedily to their hideous and pestiferous species. I assure you that I should not say anything like that. It would do no good. Most of my fellow mortals are too fond of their pestiferous lives. But that would represent the reality of my feeling beneath the kept-up appearance of my belief that there is an Eternal not ourselves which

[21] To F. W. Scott, April 8, 1917.

makes for righteousness. I am in the position of the Jews of the first century. I demand a miracle. I invite the Eternal (for men apparently can't do it) to make an end of these elaborate bloody farces. If the Eternal fails, I turn in the secrecy of my heart to worship the blessed Nothingness.

"Meanwhile my present secret feeling—it's a pleasure to talk about these things once you are started—is that the worst thing ever invented is organized society. All the pleasure it can give us is contemptible, and its capacity for inflicting pain is infinite.

"Another secret feeling: No ideal is worth fighting for. People who fight for ideals are deficient in imagination. Those who possess imagination employ it to make present to their minds the important realities of life. The great reality is pain. In it we live and move and have our being. At the present time the whole voluntary power of the earth is being directed to multiply pain beyond all precedent. This birth-pang it is predicted will produce us a divine child. More likely it will produce us a mouse.

"I have been oblivious of the war for an entire week. Early last week my mother, who is in Philadelphia, sent for me to say good-bye, for she thought her end was at hand. She pulled up by the aid of a new doctor who, recognizing the great reality, gave her the means of procuring a few hours of sleep at night. She has been a person of great fortitude all her life, but after two weeks of unintermittent reality she became a nihilist, and prayed for the blessed Nothingness. As she returned to the illusion, at the end of the week, that there is something in life after all, I returned with John to New York and left Mrs. Sherman to administer the tablets. . . .

"I hope you will have guessed that these personal matters are introduced to explain the appearances of mental aberration earlier in the letter. I believe myself to have been reasonably patient in the small physical suffering that I have had to my lot; but I do not easily bear the sufferings of others. The immediate presence of excruciating pain is horribly stimulating to the imagination. The mind passes from one case, suffering from the defects of unconscious nature, to the millions of cases suffering similarly from the deliberate intentions and maleficence of men. Then it exclaims: what the world lacks is not ideals but imagination. If it had a realizing imagination, it would require no ideals.

"This will not appeal at all to you, I suspect. It will rather disgust you; for you are 'agin' sympathy. I shall bring this out with a touch of malice in your biography."[22]

Even more outspoken and less calculated to please unqualified patriots and friends of conscription was a letter to Professor Daniels. In the mouth of another speaker, indeed, some of its expressions might have been found seditious.

". . . The call to the colors has raised in my own mind a good many questions of which I do not yet see the answer clearly. Several of my former students here, now enrolled at Columbia, have enrolled for the officers' training camp, and one of them has already sailed for France to join the ambulance corps. As a matter of *abstract ethics* one of the questions which I consider is, How many of one's family and relatives has one a right to kill at home in order to be footloose to fight the enemy abroad? Have you cleared up that question, 'Professor?' Yesterday, in turning over some old reviews of mine, I came across a notice of *The Book of the Divine Consolation of the Blessed Angela of Foligno*—a work of the religious Thirteenth Century. I will quote a few significant lines of my notice:

"'When the holy woman first began to think of becoming a recluse, she was hampered by the bonds of this world; but in due time, as she says in her pious way, "*by God's will* there died my mother, *who was a great hindrance unto me in following the way of God.*" Presently, also, her husband and children were providentially removed from her path in answer to her prayer, so that "I had great consolation of their deaths, albeit I did also feel some grief." After this the Blessed Angela took eighteen distinct psychological steps to the embrace of God.'

"Dean, Professor, this is an ethical parable. It touches on the complex mysteries of duty and loyalty. It touches the relations of individual to society, of the citizen to government. It touches, if you will permit me to say so, dear professor, something defective in our human imaginations, and something, to be brutally frank, *something rotten in our damned ideals.*

"I would not communicate these thoughts to anybody but a philosopher. But for him, they are grist to the mill.

"Your first letter, by the way, was delivered to me just as I

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[22]May 1, 1917.

was hurrying to Philadelphia at the request of my mother who thought that she was dying. Mrs. Sherman and John joined us later, and Mrs. S. stayed there for two weeks, while John and I returned to New York and kept house by ourselves. Mother has pulled through this attack, though still suffering from shattered nerves. My wife and son, moreover, are still alive, and several others of my kin are more or less dependent upon the continuance of my existence. If the divine Providence benignly takes them all to himself within the next month, I shall plead, I think, for an opportunity to go to the front with the Roosevelt division. Otherwise I think I shall resign the first stages of the fighting to those who feel a more single and undivided duty.

"But, and here I differ, no doubt, from you and Greene, whose eyes are 'single and full of light'—but the extreme limit of my warlike spirit will be reached if I offer my own body as a billet for the bullet. In the present state of my conscience and of the world's conscience, I could not say one word to urge *another* man to perform my 'duties' for me, to inhale poisoned gas for me, to fry in liquid fire for me, to blow his fellow man into dog-meat for me, or to perform any of the other sacred little jobs which our old *idealists* are urging our young *realists* to carry out.

"But here is enough for your mill for the present.

"No, I will add one other note. In Russia one gets a glimpse of a revolution more momentous than the revolution of old-line semi-democracies against autocracies. That is the revolution of the *people* against their representatives. Unless the governors of all the nations 'watch out,' there will be more of that before long—more uprisings of the dumb masses against the maladministration of the little groups of men who have failed horribly in their trust of preserving the poor little struggling happiness of this accursed world. . . ."[23]

Sherman's pen was not idle during his sojourn in New York. He had hardly found lodgings before he turned to the writing of two essays for the new edition of the Library of the World's Best Literature, his subjects being G. K. Chesterton and Henry James. The former had often engaged his interest in the *Nation*, and now Sherman brought to a focus his ideas about him with

[23]Letter to A. H. Daniels, May 13, 1917.

an antithetical wit well suited to the theme. He could hardly be an unqualified admirer of Chesterton's toryism but he relished the English flavor and the robust humor of the man, aspiring to be "as romantic as Don Quixote and as practical as Sancho Panza; as nonsensical as Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll and as purposeful as Thomas Carlyle; as exciting to the intelligence as G. B. Shaw and as sensible as the Book of Proverbs; as paradoxical as Oscar Wilde and as moral as Lord Macaulay; as mystical as William Blake and as stout and dogmatic as Samuel Johnson; as original as Browning and as conventional as Tennyson; as thoroughly in touch with the moving world as H. G. Wells and as orthodox and traditional as the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Chestertonian idea is, in short, to cast a shimmering and iridescent veil over common sense, and to reinvest in glory the traditional Anglo-Saxon Englishman, honest, prejudiced, virile, humorous, pious, violent."

In writing on Henry James, Sherman surpassed anything he had done up to that time in the way of purely literary analysis and appreciation. To many it would have been no matter of surprise if he had confined himself to stating the case against the æsthetic attitude of the novelist. They were prepared to hear him say that Henry James's representation of life "offends the whole-souled critical sense intensely," that it is "an æsthetic flat," that "it sins against the diversity, the thick rotundity, the integrity of life," that the description of his feelings on the assassination of Lincoln "insults the moral sense as a man would insult it who should ask one to note the exquisite slope of a woman's neck at the funeral of her husband" and is "a crudity of which only the most exquisite æsthete is capable." What readers were probably not so well prepared for was that after making these discriminations against "the usurpations and blindness of the æsthetic sense" Sherman should have launched into an exquisite and penetrating appreciation of "the quintessential refinement, the intriguing complexity, the white-hot ardor of his passion for beauty" which he called "the infinitely seductive, the endlessly stimulating virtue of Henry James."

While Sherman exposed the mistake of the critics whose favorite epithets for James had been "cold," "analytical," "scientific," "passionless," "pitiless," and while he gave proof

of the quality of his own æsthetic sensibility, still he made his appraisal subject to the order of values which then dominated in his thinking on literature. He placed James as a "trenchant idealistic critic of life from the æsthetic point of view," and though finding that ideal inadequate, he accorded it the high merit of being finely human. "It had," in his words, "the precious virtue of utterly delivering Henry James from the riotous and unclean hands of the 'naturalists.' To it he owes the splendid distinction that when half the novelists of Europe, carried off their feet by the naturalistic drift of the age, began to go a-slumming in the muck and mire of civilization, to explore man's simian relationship, to exploit *la bête humaine* and *l'homme moyen sensuel*, to prove the ineluctability of flesh and fate and instinct and environment—he, with aristocratic contempt for them and their formulas and their works, withdrew farther and farther from them, drew proudly out of the drift of the age, and set his imagination the task of presenting the fairest specimens of humanity in a choice sifted society tremendously disciplined by its own ideals but generally liberated from all other compelling forces." The proper expression for the judicious admirer of Henry James, according to Sherman's closing words, is, "I discriminate; but I adore him!"

Before being published in the Library of the World's Best Literature this essay was printed in the *Nation*. The editor allowed it eight solid pages, probably a unique occurrence in the annals of that periodical. On reading it Mrs. Cadwalader Jones, a close personal friend of James's who was with him during most of the last summer of his life, wrote to Sherman that his and Percy Lubbock's were the only interpretations which really got at the man. "He was one of the tenderest and most sensitive of human beings," she added, "and, as you are the only one to remark, passionately devoted to beauty and 'counsels of perfection.' Did you know him? I don't remember hearing him speak of you, but he had so many friends."[24] Mr. Bliss Perry and Mr. Frank Jewett Mather were quite carried away, the latter giving it as his opinion that a better critical essay might have been written in the last twenty years, but if so, he had not had the good luck to read it.[25] Some years later a writer in the

[24]May 3, 1917.

[25]Letter to Sherman, April 6, 1917.

New York *Dial*,[26] not otherwise friendly to Sherman's work, referred to this essay as the kind of æsthetic criticism that was needed in America.

The "leisure" of a sabbatical year and its half-pay accompaniment were a temptation to resume general reviewing for the *Nation*. This was the last year in which Sherman indulged in this practice to an extent worth mentioning. Among twenty-five or thirty unsigned contributions were a discussion of how retired university presidents might use their time for the benefit of the community, suggested by W. J. Tucker's *The New Reservation of Time*,[27] and a considered estimate of W. J. Courthope, the historian of English poetry, in whom Sherman censured an excessive reliance upon "universal" principles and "a certain theoretical solidity coupled with a practical vacuousness and infructuousness."[28] There were also reviews of several of Wells's books, of George Moore's *Brook Kerith* and Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*, incorporated by Sherman with his essays on these writers in *On Contemporary Literature*, and two further notices of Dreiser. The comments on Dreiser, while they indicate no change in the point of view, reveal, better than the longer essay, Sherman's recognition of that writer's gifts, of his "surly sincerity and crude power," his "horridly interesting," "original," and "honest" purpose. "No one," he observes, "can question his ability to use his physical eyes and ears, and to find words for the sensational life. . . . Through his piquantly original dramatic persons—chemical elements, voices, phantoms, and squalid human creatures—Mr. Dreiser does manage to express his curious gloomy bewilderment about the universe, his sense of the hollow hypocrisy of religion, his conviction of the impotence of ideas, the omnipotence of animal and mechanical forces, his somewhat sardonic satisfaction in brutality, his æsthetic pleasure in what he conceives to be man's natural tendency to degradation." If all this was apparently lacking in poetic suggestion, Sherman's manner of treating it was adequate to supply the need, for it gives a distinct impetus to the imagination to read that "in the mud and scum of

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[26]November, 1922.

[27]January 11, 1917.

[28]May 31, 1917.

things something always sings to the not over-nice ear of Mr. Dreiser."[29]

A review of Professor Harper's *William Wordsworth* brought a letter to the *Nation* from Professor Lovejoy in which the reviewer was charged not only with an imperfect acquaintance with the history of political theory but also with ignorance of simple chronology. Because the reviewer had said that the writings of the Federalists were an answer to the teachings of "anarchical Godwinian individualism" and had grouped Mill, Bentham, and Godwin as united in their concern for the freedom of the individual, his censor rashly assumed that he did not know the date of Godwin's *Political Justice* and was unaware that Mill was born after the publication of the *Federalist.* Irritating as such charges might be from such a source, it is doubtful whether Sherman would have gone to the trouble of answering them if they had not been joined with certain more colorable indictments against his scholarship. He defended himself with a pardonable show of temper but with entire success on every point that had been made against him, and in several particulars turned the tables on his critic.[30] The most interesting feature of this controversy is that it gave Sherman an opening to indicate his views on college administration, particularly with respect to participation in it by the faculty. Professor Lovejoy had objected to the treatment of Rousseau and Bentham as forces favoring the growth of political individualism. Sherman answered that Professor Lovejoy had been more or less misled by the penchant exhibited by Rousseau and Bentham for *legislating*, and then went on as follows:

"The matter is too complex for satisfactory discussion here; but one may perhaps light a candle by which the relation between legislating and individualism may be profitably examined. Most college professors—excepting deans and presidents—are, it will be generally admitted, individualists! Some of them closely approximate the 'Godwinian anarchist,' who is significantly companionable with the socialist. What each one of this temper actually demands is free play for his own individuality. What each one fears is authority centralized in the office of the

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[29]October 12, 1916.

[30]"An Old-Fashioned Controversy," *Nation*, May 10, 1917.

dean or the president. What each one professes to desire is to subject his individual will to the *volonté générale* discoverable in a meeting of the Faculty. What is likely to happen in a numerous Faculty inspired with a belief in pure democracy is endless palaver, at the end of which, perhaps, some prominent rationalizing individualist or 'anarchist' comes forward with an elaborate and impractical legislative program for curbing the powers of the 'autocrat' and permitting the individual to do as he pleases. What the friends of good government foresee as the result of the proposed distribution of power is not so much a 'tyranny of the majority' as a tyranny of the leaders of the majority, tempered by a disposition on the part of the sturdier individualists to disregard the majority vote and to be a law unto themselves. The results are various. If the individualists have a fair taste of the labors of legislating and administering their laws, there may be a strong reaction, caused by fatigue and the perplexities of anarchy, in favor of a strong, stable, centralized power outside their number, or in favor of the delegation of most of their affairs to a small group of their representatives."

During his last months in New York Sherman wrote an introduction for the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, worked on the revision of his *Nation* essays preparatory to assembling them in a book, and sketched a tentative introduction which should give point to the collection. He left the city on May 30th and, traveling by way of Philadelphia and Washington, reached Manistee on June 1st.

CHAPTER XVII

"ON CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE"

BEFORE he left New York Sherman, on May 22d, formally made offer of his volume of essays to Henry Holt & Company, "in compliance with a long-standing invitation from Mr. Henry Holt," and on the following day he wrote to Mr. More asking for permission to dedicate the book to him and enclosed a copy of the Introduction

(*To P. E. More*)

500 West 112th Street, New York,
May 23rd, 1917.

MY DEAR MORE:

Bacon says somewhere, or should say somewhere, that friends are for pleasure and for use. I propose this evening to take up the second aspect of the relationship. This morning I turned in to Henry Holt & Co. the manuscript of my volume of essays. I think that I want to dedicate it to somebody. Is that a proper desire? If so, may I dedicate it to you?

This whole matter may be much more delicate than I in my innocence suspect. You may not want to be publicly connected with the work. Perhaps I should wait till I can confer rather than receive honor in the dedication. But I call upon you to judge in your own case with your customary firm impartiality.

As titles for the volume, the following were under consideration, some more, some very much less, seriously:

Essays on Men and Monkeys
Essays in Discrimination
Against Nature
A Return to Man
A Return to Civility
Main Tendencies in Contemporary Literature

The last I have provisionally adopted. The essays included are as follows:

Introduction

I The Democracy of Mark Twain
II The Utopian Naturalism of H. G. Wells
III The Barbaric Naturalism of Theo. Dreiser
IV The Æsthetic Naturalism of Geo. Moore
V The Realism of Arnold Bennett
VI The Skepticism of Anatole France
VII The Exoticism of John Synge
VIII The Complacent Toryism of Alfred Austin
IX The Æsthetic Idealism of Henry James
X The Humanism of Geo. Meredith
XI The Humanism of Shakespeare

The impudent emphasis upon "isms" is deliberate. It is explained to some extent in the Introduction. The Introduction is in my opinion the most questionable feature of the performance. Its present form is tentative, and its final form questionable. The specially difficult part is of course the references to you and I. B. and other leaders. The juxtaposition of you and Chesterton, for example, is funny. But I have a feeling that something of the sort may be, might be useful. A year or so ago, for example, a very intelligent colleague of mine asked me to give some descriptive account (for one of our "learned societies") of the present "humanistic movement" in literary criticism. I did not comply, and this Introduction does not do the job. But I should think it might possibly be regarded as a contribution towards it—when properly corrected, enlarged, or abbreviated.—Well, I should like very much to have your candid opinion on the point. Accordingly I enclose a copy of the rather hastily drafted Introduction. If you can find time to send me a few thoughts soon, I shall be very grateful. . . .

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

Mr. More's acceptance was gracious: "It would be a pleasure to receive the dedication of any book written in the spirit of your Introduction, or, I might say, of a book written by you in

any spirit. And apart from the matter of personal flattery, I think our strength must be found in union. We are a small band *contra mundum*, and if we are to be heard, we must raise our voices in unison." He then commends him for "striking a good blow for the world of order and righteousness."[1]

The negotiations with the publishers did not pass off without some friction. In the business arrangements for his books Sherman was far from difficult. He liked to speak his mind plainly, particularly where it was a question of literary judgment, but was easily persuaded to accept the views of the publisher on the economics involved. Mr. Holt's first letter after receiving the manuscript dwelt on the general unprofitableness of publishing books of essays and on the desirability of waiting till the war was over before issuing this volume. The proposed royalty excluded the first 1,500 copies, and there was a suggestion that Sherman should compensate the firm for its liberality by sending it the long-solicited article for the *Unpopular Review* and a book on some "integral subject." This letter was shortly followed by another asking for some modifications of the manuscript and questioning the propriety of including the essay on Shakespeare in a volume on contemporary writers. To both of these letters Sherman replied in a tone which, under the circumstances, could hardly be more temperate.

(*To Henry Holt*)

Route 1, Box 64 B, Manistee, Michigan,
June 18, 1917.

DEAR MR. HOLT:

Your proposal that I content myself "with nothing" till after fifteen hundred copies are sold is not precisely flattering to the pride of an author; but the reward proposed is what one is accustomed to, and *that* one usually accepts without much grumbling.

The postponement of publication *till after the war is over*, I am more disposed to "view with alarm." The book has some pretensions to contemporary interest. I don't want to bring it out when all the authors treated are become ancient classics.

[1]May 25, 1917.

You yourself (or your reader) suggest the Wells essay be brought up to date by the discussion of *Mr. Britling* and *God, the Invisible King*. Well, I can do that in a week or less; but if you don't publish promptly, Wells will have turned a dozen somersaults in half a dozen additional books before mine is out.

Naturally, I don't agree very well with your reader—or with the impression of the book which he has conveyed to you. I have made no special plea for the Victorians. I have tried rather to bring out the requisites of sound literature whatever the period, and to show wherein some of our illustrious contemporaries fall short. Now, in my scheme the Shakespeare essay is an essential part of the exposition. The article is not a "Tercentenary Address." It is a more or less polemical drive at the "naturalistic" spirit of our contemporaries over the body of Shakespeare; and I think it will be recognized as such by several critics of eminence.—Furthermore, I hold that Shakespeare is a *contemporary* and that he always will be.—There was not on my part the slightest idea of chucking him into the volume to fill up. He was put in on business,—for the belligerent purpose which runs pretty straight through them all. The inclusion can easily be explained by a few lines in the Introduction, so that the reader will not feel that he has been dishonorably treated.

You have given me one or two openings which I cannot resist taking advantage of. You asked me, when I offered to submit the manuscript, how many publishers had rejected it. I replied "none"; but I neglected to add that I had refused three publishers who had asked for the manuscript, because I had long since engaged to offer it to you; and I may add that all three requests came from men who were acquainted with the proposed contents of the volume.

Second point: You ask me very good-humoredly to write a book on some integral subject to compensate you for publishing this one. I reply, also very good-humoredly, that you ought to publish this one to compensate for the *Treasure Island* and *The Book of Short Stories* which I elaborately edited for you for the perfectly beggarly fees of $100 and $150 respectively. From what I have seen and heard, you must be selling several thousand copies of these books annually. And now that I offer you a volume containing the distilled results of ten years' hard reading and writing, I am to pay myself with "glory." An author who

furnishes a publisher three books for a total sum of $250 certainly cannot be expected to feel under very deep pecuniary obligations to him. "Glory" thus appears to be a rather expensive luxury; but I cannot get along without it.

In conclusion, I agree to the Shylock-terms, *provided that you agree to publication in the fall of this year.*

If you changed "1500 copies" to read "1000 copies," I should offer no objection.

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

Mr. Holt admitted the validity of Sherman's contention with regard to Shakespeare and conceded the point of early publication with the flattering remark that there were not half a dozen men in America, or anywhere else, for whom he would do even that much, and added that he was willing to risk his reputation for fairness and liberality on the terms he had named. He refused, however, to recognize the justice of the claim based on the two textbooks in the "English Readings Series." Sherman brought the discussion to a satisfactory conclusion with a good-humored letter in which the note of apology will not be taken too seriously.

(*To Henry Holt*)

Route 1, Box 64 B, Manistee, Michigan,
June 30, 1917.

DEAR MR. HOLT:

I have very bad luck with my correspondence. Whenever a natural humorist writes to me in humorous vein, I attempt to answer in the same vein. Almost invariably what I design for jocosity takes effect as seriousness, and what I design for seriousness takes effect as jocosity. Thus my railing at the tight fists of publishers in general and at the austere dealings of Henry Holt and Company in particular was designed to pass for the gayest species of pleasantry. In return you explain that the house is really fair and liberal. This almost breaks my heart! Could you suppose that I doubted it? You know the publisher's business. I know nothing about it; and therefore jest about it—just so men jest about the Angel Gabriel, the Prince of Darkness, the Secretary of the Navy, etc., etc. When I speak about

the "author," on the other hand, I simply set forth the plain facts. I make this explanation in the hope of removing from your mind the impression of wailing and ululation apparently produced by my previous letter.

It is easy to take this jocund note, I may as well admit; for I have just received a letter from Mr. Roland Holt agreeing to the modifications which I proposed and suggested. Your faith in the early demotion of "Old Bill Hohenzollern," as Col. Watterson calls him, is also comforting to the heart. I am not expecting to get rich out of this book; but I should be glad to look forward towards getting back in two or three years the cost of "typing" it; and under the modified terms I believe there's a fair prospect of that!—possibly a little more than that. In conclusion, it has been my desire to put kick *into* the book and not *about* it.

With best regards,
Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

A good portion of the summer months was devoted to completing the revision of the essays for this book and to rewriting the Introduction. In several of the papers—those on Dreiser, Bennett, and James—only slight verbal changes were made, and the amplification of a few passages in the "Alfred Austin" was of no serious importance. The "John Synge" and "George Moore" were amplified and elaborated by the passages which the editors of the *Nation* had felt constrained to cut out for lack of space, their value consisting in the force which is given to an idea by fuller illustration. The "George Moore" essay was further augmented by the interweaving of material from reviews of some of that author's later books, notably *Brook Kerith*, which could be done in this instance without in any way modifying the point of view. The same process was applied to the reworking of the essays on Anatole France, H. G. Wells, and Mark Twain, being particularly important in the case of the two last. In discussing the new aspect of Wells which came to light during the war there was no better way of showing the shift than to make a separate section of his latest books. The Mark Twain essay, however, is in its main portion a skillful fusion of the signed article in the *Nation* of 1910 and the elabo-

rate unsigned review of Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine's *Life of Mark Twain* which appeared in the *Nation* in 1912, the review of *The Mysterious Stranger* being attached as a kind of coda. The posthumous publication of the latter book and of *What Is Man?* necessitated also certain modifications, not of a violent kind, in the expressions of the original essay. Finally, the paper on Meredith was enriched by a passage of ten pages, and a page was added to the end of the essay on Shakespeare with a view to bringing into sharper focus the dominating motive of the volume.

Apart from changes in the substance the most thoroughgoing revision is to be found in the essay on Meredith. Some of it is by way of giving specific illustration to ideas that were enunciated with relative bareness in the original form. Sometimes it is to tone down an extreme statement, sometimes to strengthen an unduly cautious one. Many of the changes, perhaps the most interesting ones, are made from purely stylistic motives—to give sharper precision to the meaning and greater concreteness to the expression, to improve the rhythm and to clinch an idea vividly by means of an image. Thus, having said in the original essay that "Shakespeare's plays are sown with volume-speaking words; in Meredith's novels I do not find anything approaching it," he adds in the revision: "Too often in Meredith there is volubility where in Shakespeare silence is the orator." This sort of manipulation is evidence that Sherman never wearied in the effort to bring his writing to as fine a point as it would bear. He continued in this attention to detail till the end.

For the essays thus collected and brought up to date the new Introduction supplied a principle of unity. The central point of this Introduction had been forcibly stated by Sherman four years earlier in a review of a book by Sigurd Ibsen sharply criticizing current naturalistic tendencies. In that connection he had first phrased his maxim that the great task of Nineteenth Century thought had been to put man into nature and that of Twentieth Century thought was to get him out again. He had then gone on to state in impressive language the demands of the humanistic critic of society:

"That external government is most beneficent which resists most effectively the stress of natural forces, and which im-

presses most deeply upon the consciousness of society the validity and sanctity of human conventions, and the desirableness of continuing to work out in the world that ideal pattern which lies in the heart. If this is true, then the most progressive society will be likewise the most conservative, the most reverent of traditions, the most critical of hasty innovation, the most reluctant to entrust its destiny to the gusty and transitory passions of the hour. Haunted by dim memories of cataclysmic floods and tragic forebodings of fiery ruin, it will not look for its eternal and unchanging sanctions in the weltering flux of natural phenomena; not seek in nature for the order, stability, justice, gentleness, and wisdom that only man has ever desired or sought to create. It will permit its scientists to return to nature, for that is their business; but it will urge its educators, its moralists, its artists, and its lawmakers to return to man and follow their pattern."[2]

When for the "dim memories of cataclysmic floods and tragic forebodings of fiery ruin" there was suddenly substituted the overwhelming horror of immediate calamity, intensified, too, by an experience of private suffering, Sherman was more impressed than ever with the need of asserting a standard of human values, weak and ineffectual as that seemed in the moment of despair. Realizing how the "insensate and involuntary forces of nature are in unremitting conspiracy against the happiness of man," his conscience was the more outraged at the sight of man himself seeking "with the utmost deliberateness, with all the energy of his will, with all the resources of his intellect, in all quarters of the globe, to multiply pain beyond all recorded precedent—pain to the body and pain to the heart—disease, dismemberment, and death, to body, mind, and spirit." The cause of this human failure he felt justified in tracing to the influence in every sphere of human activity of a mode of thinking proper to the natural sciences, a mode of thinking which, in Dante's phrase, "made lust and law alike in her decree," exalting instinct over reason and conscience. "We have trusted our instincts," wrote Sherman, "long enough to sound the depths of their treacherousness. We have followed nature to the last ditch and ditch water. In these days when the educator, returning from the observation of

[2] *Nation*, May 15, 1913.

the dog kennel with a treatise on animal behavior, thinks he has a real clue to the education of children; when the criminologist with a handful of cranial measurements imagines that he has solved the problem of evil; when the clergyman discovers the ethics of the spirit by meditating on the phagocytes in the blood; when the novelist returning from the zoölogical gardens wishes to revise the relations of the sexes so as to satisfy the average man's natural craving for three wives; when the statesman after due reflection on 'the survival of the fittest' feels justified in devouring his neighbors—in the presence of all these appeals to nature, we may wisely welcome any indication of a counter-revolution."

Of the three weapons with which current naturalism might be combated—the purely metaphysical, the intuitional-religious, and that of Johnsonian common sense, Sherman chose the third, not only as the best suited to his own temperament and intellectual equipment but because it seemed to him most in keeping with the tendency of American criticism. The object of this criticism in his view was "not primarily to reclaim man for God but to reclaim him for civil society." Seeking no quarrel, on the one hand, with scientific monism as a theory of great logical cogency, he dismissed it as irrelevant to human needs and contradictory to human experience; professing his inability, on the other hand, "to climb the steeps of mystical experience," he allied himself with the saints in recognizing the eternal conflict between "the law for things" and "the law for man." His position, therefore, was at this stage somewhat closer to Professor Babbitt than to Mr. More, though the characteristic attitudes of both critics enter into Sherman's expressions. If in defining this position and uttering a hope for the triumph of human ideals Sherman identifies these ideals with the cause of the Allies, the partiality does no serious injury to his argument. Whether or not the German label is correctly affixed to the hated thing, the wished-for consummation remains the same—a society more regardful of its ascertained values and recognizing "the desirability of continuing to work out in the world that ideal pattern which lies in the instructed and disciplined heart."

Considered with reference to this point of view most of the essays in the volume readily fall into place. The brunt of the assault is borne by Theodore Dreiser, George Moore, John

Synge, and H. G. Wells. In spite of the fact that in each of them Sherman found something which, as a lover of literature, he could admire, his dominant interest was in opposing and discrediting the main tendency of their writings. The case of Anatole France was rather different. In him Sherman found a kind of damaged angel, one who began life as a devout humanist, a worshiper of the beauty of Greece and Rome, and becoming disheartened, avenged himself by mocking at the faith of the new generation and insinuating horrible doubt in every heart. The skepticism of France he declared to be largely a literary pose, a pretext for unlimited intellectual self-indulgence and a cloak for a philosophic sentimentality which cultivated those truths, or seeming truths, that make for melancholy and "induce in the perceiver a pensive and helpless sadness." But though by his standard he judged this writer to fall short through his failure to make intimates of those truths "which give channel and speed to the languid diffusive drift of our days," he felt deeply the seductive charm of his Epicurean temperament and yielded homage to the fascination of his style.

Opposite this group stand, on distinctly different levels, the figures of Arnold Bennett, Henry James, George Meredith, and Shakespeare, alike in that they all adopt a human measure of value but unlike in the quality and range of their humanity. Whereas the view of life underlying Bennett's representation of character is essentially prosaic and that of James too exclusive in its fastidious refinement, to Meredith's is ascribed both nobility and sweep, a recognition of the concord in man of flesh, mind, and spirit. "Like his master Shakespeare, speaking nobly of the body, nobly of the mind, and nobly of the spirit, he sounds the chord of full harmony for which our hearts are eager. . . . In close touch with distinguished leaders of liberal thought, he heartily partook in their sense of high responsibility to society and in their resolution to make war without truce upon the confederated lusts and egotisms of unredeemed animal man." The argument is carried to a grand climax in the discussion of Shakespeare himself, the last paragraph rounding out with a beautiful harmony the theme of ideal humanity which runs through the book:

"Though his vision of life extended to the depths beneath and to the heights above the reach and comprehension of man's

mind, he dwelt habitually in that cleared and settled and spacious region of consciousness in which a man's thinking is right and his feelings are sure, in which the elementary human values are fixed, in which truth and goodness and beauty remain the same from age to age. He was to pass through times when literature would beat vain wings in the religious inane, and through times when it would sink in the naturalistic abyss; but he knew, he must have known, that whenever men returned from these aberrations to the wide sunlit human level they would find him their contemporary, they would come upon him in the midst of it, representing still with incomparable adequacy what can be seen from that point of view. Happy are they who diligently seek for the center of that sunlit level, and thrice blessed they that find it."

Two essays have thus far been omitted from consideration—"The Democracy of Mark Twain" and "The Complacent Toryism of Alfred Austin." The former claims a place of its own in Sherman's scheme, even though it is not directly pointed against the sins of "naturalism." The war was being treated on all sides as a challenge to democracy, and democracy was one of Sherman's cherished hopes for the evolution of human life. His criticism of Wells during the war was largely based on the embodiment in the latter's books of a conception of the scientific state overriding the liberties of the individual man. Pointing to the realization of Wells's dream of state authority and governmental efficiency in the military machine of the Kaiser, he insisted on its temporary character. The moment peace is made, he declared, "human nature will return to its belief in certain inalienable individual human rights. . . . In the moment that the all-sanctifying military necessity relaxes, some at least of the 'moral' qualities which, in the state of war, governments stamp with the highest values will be popularly rated like Confederate 'shinplasters'; and plain people, chafing under orders to march in directions which they have not determined, will be praying again to the shiftless and inefficient God of the Victorians to preserve them from too much government." It was to reaffirm in a period of general misgiving his sympathy with the needs and aspirations of the plain man that Sherman put in his essay on Mark Twain. The democracy represented by Mark Twain, it should be remembered, was not to Sherman an object of un-

alloyed admiration. He had analyzed with adequate pungency its provinciality, its self-satisfaction, and its crassness, and he had given carefully measured praise to its generous impulses, its broad common sense, and its moral robustness. "Mark Twain," he said, "does not give us much help toward realizing our best selves; but he is a rock of refuge when the ordinary self—'the divine average' is in danger." The essay formed a significant individual strand in the texture of the humanistic web.

One cannot find a similar justification for the inclusion of the poet laureate in this gallery. Sherman's purpose, in spite of the veiled humor with which it is announced, is clear enough. Having been branded as a "besotted Victorian," he felt bound "to give a certain color to the charge." To criticize Victorianism, however, through such a silly figure as Sir Alfred Austin, though it provides excellent amusement, is not convincing as a repudiation of the Victorian outlook. Repudiation, to be sure, was not exactly in Sherman's mind, but his design of insinuating that he was not living completely in the bondage of the Victorian tradition might have been better effected by substituting the essay on Chesterton, written in the previous winter for the Library of the World's Best Literature, an essay more in keeping with the scheme of the book and in every way more worthy of preservation.

From most of the reviewers in New York the book on its appearance received a cordial greeting. There was wide recognition of its unusual and distinctive qualities—approval of its central position, and admiration for its literary excellence. The *Evening Post* compared Sherman to his advantage with the three elder critics of the conservative school,[3] while Professor Brander Matthews in the *Times* pointed out his likeness to Jules Lemaître.[4] The *Herald* called it one of the rare works of constructive criticism in America,[5] and the Brooklyn *Eagle* had an editorial endorsement of a similar judgment by its reviewer.[6] The *Sun*, a little fumblingly, made efforts to discriminate,[7]

[3]January 2, 1918.
[4]December 30, 1917.
[5]December 22, 1917.
[6]February 9, 1918.
[7]February 17, 1918.

but the *Telegraph* dropped all bars to its enthusiasm.[8] One of the most interesting tributes came from the Socialist daily, the New York *Call*,[9] which, though it objected to Sherman's strictures on socialism, on Wells and on Dreiser, and, disregarding its own principles, blamed him for catering to "the verdict of the people" in his praise of Mark Twain, yet expressed its admiration for the book as being based on an attitude toward life, and dwelt on its thoughtfulness and literary richness, observing that "criticism, when weighted with authority, but not made heavy with pedanticism, is a welcome delight to the lover of books."

Among the weeklies (to say nothing of the chorus of praise from the religious journals—Catholic and Protestant alike—which Sherman received with a somewhat wry grace) such different organs as the *Nation*[10] and *Musical America*[11] were equally laudatory. In the *Publishers' Weekly*,[12] Mr. Frederick Taber Cooper, while writing with generous appreciation of the critical merits of the book, protested, but with a moderate voice, against what seemed to him a too inflexible moral standard resulting in unfairness to Anatole France, George Moore, Theodore Dreiser, and even Mark Twain. It is clear, however, that he missed something significant in Sherman's feeling for literature when, in praising "the almost flawless appreciation" of Henry James, he referred to it as "a delightful example of keen and sympathetic understanding by a critic who does not himself wholly measure his own mental relaxation in breathing such congenial atmosphere." Unawareness of the nature of his æsthetic reactions is the last suspicion that should be directed against Sherman.

Outside of New York, too, if one notable city is excepted, the book met with respectful and friendly treatment, in which the praise nearly always outweighed the reservations. In the *Yale Review*,[13] Professor Bliss Perry acclaimed it as "the most memorable volume of critical essays which we have had for many a

[8] January 3, May 23, 1918.
[9] January 27, 1918.
[10] April 4, 1918.
[11] May 18, 1918.
[12] January 19, 1918.
[13] July, 1918.

year," and while thinking that Sherman might here and there have improved his treatment of a given writer, expressed complete agreement with his point of view. Papers of the caliber of the Springfield *Republican* and the Baltimore *Evening Sun* also gave deliberate and discerning attention to the claims of the point of view represented by Sherman, even though they did not wholly agree with it, and recognized him as one of the few American critics who had something of value to say on the important concerns of life. The former took occasion to deplore that Sherman should have associated himself with Mr. Paul More and to say that he would have been a better critic if he had chosen other guides,[14] while the latter attempted to adjust the scales fairly between Sherman and Mr. Mencken.[15] There was a good, fair-minded discussion by Mr. Allan Updegraff in the *Plowshare*[16] and one not so good by Mr. Roger Montgomery in *Reedy's Mirror*.[17] Both of these writers felt that Sherman had put too great a strain upon "naturalism," but in spite of that Mr. Montgomery commended the book to "modernists" for its point and faith, its wide reading, zest, humor, and mastery of style, and Mr. Updegraff rejoiced that "one having authority" had pointed out "the fundamental weakness, become fundamental putridity in Dreiser, of those three littérateurs [George Moore, Wells, Dreiser]" and had done it so pungently, even if narrowly and unfairly. The *Living Age*[18] the Boston *Herald*,[19] the Minneapolis *Journal*,[20] the Newark *News*,[21] the San Francisco *Argonaut*,[22] the *Bellman*,[23] the Hartford *Courant*,[24] were among the papers in different sections of the country which passed a dominantly favorable judgment on the book.

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[14]January 6, 1918.
[15]January 26, 1918.
[16]January, 1918.
[17]March 10, 1918.
[18]March 16, 1918.
[19]March 23, 1918.
[20]March 19, 1918.
[21]April 13, 1918.
[22]February 16, 1918.
[23]February 9, 1918.
[24]January 29, 1918.

All, however, was not friendliness or even fairness. The hostile forces were lying in wait, and spokesmen of the "younger generation" and champions of protest and revolt against the very notion of "standards" uprose in all their might. Their procedure was first to misrepresent the book as the embodiment of a petty moralism and then to parade their own superior æsthetic insight at the expense of the diminished critic. The *Smart Set*, through the voice of its master, snorted at "the pedagogic view of literature" whose aim it was to inculcate virtue.[25] The *Bookman*[26] was quite unintelligible. In the *New Republic*, Mr. Francis Hackett gave a display not only of unfairness but of very questionable sincerity when he described Sherman as a timid, insipid moralizer, an exponent of "that bloodless correctness to which New England has given its wintry favor," and as cowering behind the moral life of the race to peer at art.[27] It so happened that when Sherman's signed article on Mark Twain appeared in the *Nation* in 1910, Mr. Hackett had hastened to write and tell him how much impressed he was by the keenness and justice with which the article defined "the instinct which Americans have against exclusiveness" and how much he admired the way in which, "without a trace of the *précieux*" Sherman censured the Philistine without impeaching his own democracy.[28] Subsequently he had solicited Sherman's coöperation for the *New Republic* and had singled out his articles as a striking exception to "the placid and orderly exterior that is offered by the reviews of the New York *Nation*."[29] The judgment of the later review presents too sharp a discrepancy from these opinions to be acceptable as a sincere change of view. Perhaps Mr. Hackett shared the belief, said to have been expressed by Randolph Bourne, that Sherman was the most dangerous man in America and that therefore one could not be too nice in the choice of weapons for fighting him. Randolph Bourne himself, however, did condescend, almost alone in his group, to a show of reasonableness in discussing *On Contemporary Literature*. He was willing to

[25] April, 1918.
[26] February, March, 1918.
[27] January 12, 1918.
[28] May 14, 1910.
[29] *New Republic*, January 8, 1916.

grant to Sherman a mind that honestly tried to think things out and that had not surrendered to the entire war philosophy. More than that, he detected, chiefly through the essay on Alfred Austin, an air of "potential originality" which made him hope that Sherman might yet be saved to the younger generation who needed his wit and pungency and formal skillfulness. Of course he convicted him of "an incorrigible prepossession of moralism that constantly confuses artistic values with Mr. Sherman's standard of personal rectitude" and deplored that the style of a cosmopolitan critic should be wasted in conveying the message of a Baptist minister, but at least he took the pains to explain why he thought Sherman's ethical outlook defective and to set forth clearly his own belief that convention and tradition are irrational and that the plane of the personal life can be reached only by a struggle against both nature and organized society.[30]

The criticism of Sherman's "puritan moralism" sometimes took amusing forms. Thus a writer in the Detroit *Journal* solemnly averred that it is possible to like both Shakespeare and George Moore.[31] The Philadelphia *Press*, considering these "Pollyannas of criticism," trembled for the future of a literature which the professional puritan persisted in measuring with a moral yardstick, and, most delicious of all, the San Francisco *Chronicle*, after pronouncing with magisterial offhandedness that a book like this is of no great value to "enjoyers of literature," proceeded to praise nearly all the essays of the volume individually. But these were only children's squibs in comparison with the noisy fireworks that were discharged by the united cohorts of the Chicago press.

In the long history of reviewing there have doubtless been equally glaring displays of spite or stupidity or willful blindness, but seldom have the newspaper men of a large city flung themselves with such venom and such an approach to unanimity, as though by a preconcerted plan, on an object of dislike. The outburst is interesting, if for no other reason, as providing a specimen of the critical standards and the delicate manners of Chicago writers at a moment when that city was raising its crest as a literary leader in the land. The note of unrestrained and unscrupulous abuse was struck stridently by Mr. Burton Rascoe

[30] *Liberator*, June, 1918.

[31] April 3, 1918.

in the Chicago *Tribune*.[32] He could hardly be surpassed for nastiness of expression, but the *News* did as well as it could by describing Sherman as "ranting, sneering, strutting, the most hilariously ridiculous figure that ever pretended critical comment"; "and," it added with characteristic elegance, "there have been some birds!"[33] Mr. Lewis Galantière in the *Examiner*[34] assumed a choice, sneering style, making Sherman appear as an "exquisite pink-cheeked acolyte" whose idea of literature was anything which might be given with perfect safety to a boy or girl of fourteen years to read. Mr. Galantière, like Mr. Rascoe, discovered plagiarism from French critics and, like him again, discovered that the motive of Sherman's writing was to break into the sacred precincts of the Brahmins. This last insinuation was also repeated with more politeness of phrase by a writer who should have known better. According to Mr. H. B. Fuller[35] Sherman's paradise was that of a middle-aged conservative, "an order in which an exceptional Middle-Westerner has been found worthy to write for the *Nation* and now enjoys the privilege of dedicating his volume to its former editor." The *Post* treated the book as an impressive example of how not to criticize[36] and was sure that if Sherman ever wrote about Keats he would condemn him for his love of beauty,[37] but this critic at least showed a benevolent concern for Sherman's salvation by advising him to read Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* that he might compare his own "fussy anxiety over morals" with the sanity and balance of a real humanist.[38] This was better, anyway, than the *Herald*, which, observing that we have "largely outgrown the fashion of Stuart P. Sherman's saucy yet academic studies," offered no helpful suggestion whatsoever.[39] Fitting to round out the harmony of this chorus is the voice of the *Musical Leader* proclaiming the volume as "a gross example of a wholly unnecessary book

[32] January 12, 1918.
[33] January 9, 1918.
[34] January 19, 1918.
[35] *Dial*, January 31, 1918.
[36] March 1, 1918.
[37] January 11, 1918.
[38] January 25, 1918.
[39] January 19, 1918.

about books" and one which "should add a chapter on the asininity of pedagogical pygmies."[40] And yet, to be entirely fair to Chicago, one should not overlook B. L. T.'s commendation of the "informing and stimulating collection of essays" in which the author "squanders an entire chapter on Theodore Dreiser." This, however, was greeted with a jibe in the columns of his own paper.

When one stops to inquire into the cause of all this rancor it is not easy to find any explanation other than that a group of young, arrogant, and undisciplined writers imagined it had an opportunity to aggrandize itself at the expense of a substantial book that represented the opposite and less popular camp in criticism. Mr. Rascoe, to be sure, tried subsequently to justify his attack as a piece of vengeance on Sherman for his review under the heading "Beautifying American Literature," of Mencken's *Book of Prefaces* in the *Nation* of November 29, 1917. But aside from the fact that Mr. Mencken never stood in need of a protector or hired bravo, Mr. Rascoe rather spoiled his explanation when, in a conciliatory mood several years later, he admitted in a letter to Sherman the "lack of conscience" in his review of *On Contemporary Literature* and said that his attack was stimulated by Sherman's article in the *Nation* on "Cannibals and Lotus Eaters." This explanation in its turn is unfortunately vitiated by the fact that the essay in question did not appear till January 31, 1918, whereas the date of Mr. Rascoe's review is January 12th. Furthermore, there was nothing in this article that need have affronted Mr. Rascoe personally, for it was only a statement, in ironic dress, of the failure of American literature generally to occupy itself with the social, moral, and political life of the nation. Be the explanation what it may, the attack acted as an irritant on Sherman. For some time it gave a special acerbity to his observations on certain of the "younger" critics, and when a few years later the voice of Chicago changed its pitch and he came face to face with some of his former assailants, he did not let the occasion slip without some direct speech on literary manners. Sherman was never indifferent to the opinion of his contemporaries. He accepted the abuse along with the praise as

[40]April 25, 1918.

satisfactory evidence of the impression he had made. "One main reason," he said, "for writing of critical matters is to force a consideration of 'what we are about in God's creation'; and there are always at least two views about that."[41] That he preferred praise to abuse is not a sign of unnatural weakness in him. Acknowledging some review clippings sent to him by Van Doren, he wrote:

"B. M.'s was certainly kindly and indulgent, and, as the canny Allan N. notes, excellent advertising in a conspicuous place. He pokes a certain amount of fun at me but I laid myself open to that and deserved it. I don't know whether I ought to write and thank him or not. My conscience relucts a little against saying thank you, for something which was probably not done to please me; for why should B. M. desire to please me? But if you happen to see him you might say that I was gratified, or such fitter words as come to your more eloquent lips.—The *Sun* notice I had not seen. It rather particularly pleased me by its liveliness and by its general representation of the book as lively. You may recall, that the Holts feared it would be 'still born' if issued in the war time."[42]

From both Professor Babbitt and Mr. More, in the meantime, the book received the kind of welcome that might have been expected. The former wrote:

"It seems hard to get a hearing for any anti-naturalistic point of view these days, but if anybody can get it you will, for all your writing possesses in an unusual degree the prime virtue of readableness. Most of the reviewing that possesses any significance is falling into the hands of ardent young Deweyites and they will of course pounce upon a book of this kind. . . .

"The essay on Shakespeare is easily my favorite in the volume. My next choices would I think be the papers on Synge and Wells. I feel a fundamental rightness in both of them. Personally I should not be quite so ready to issue a certificate of immortality to A. France in the company of Voltaire and Rabelais. His work has about it a certain atmosphere of effeteness; and Voltaire and Rabelais, whatever else may be said about them, are not effete. I also balk a little at the term humanist bestowed upon Meredith. I have not read much of him, but the *Egoist*,

[41]To F. L. Pattee, February 7, 1918.

[42]January 3, 1918.

which I have read, seemed to be marred by a good deal of wordiness and contortion and affectation, all traits at the opposite pole from humanism. More, who has just been making me a visit, agrees with me here. Very likely we are both wrong."[43]

"Your letter about my book," Sherman wrote in acknowledgment, "pleased me very much. You treated it indulgently; but after reading the Chicago papers, which with one accord went after it with their war paint on, I could stand a little indulgence. If the rage which one excites in the hearts of the wicked is any measure of the success of virtue, I should feel, nevertheless, that I have produced an extraordinarily virtuous book! Henry Holt feared that if it were issued in war-time it would fall 'dead from the press'—or at least he said so. It hasn't fallen dead by any means. From Baltimore to San Francisco the chorus of indolent reviewers has given it paragraphs enough, in which you and More come in for your share of attention."[44]

With Mr. More Sherman launched into a discussion which is of the greatest importance to an understanding of the direction which his thought was beginning to take and which marks the channel of his writing for the next half-dozen years. Mr. More acknowledged the book which had been dedicated to him with a letter of warmest appreciation, expressing confidence in the effect which it would produce by its brilliance, its contemporaneity, and its satire (Mr. More never failed in generosity toward Sherman and never tired in private conversation of proclaiming him one of the greatest critics and the most brilliant writer in America), but he would not have been Mr. More if he had not at the same time observed and pointed out a discrepancy between Sherman's complaint in his Introduction about this worst of all possible worlds and his faith in progress. He criticized, too, Sherman's acceptance of democracy as "a term of blessed omen," adding, "I do not say this in a spirit intrinsically anti-democratic, but as wishing for a clear definition of what the word means. Certainly to most men the naturalism of Wells is of the very essence of democracy. You may be right in applauding democracy and rejecting naturalism, but you ought to make your position plain." This supplied the core of the debate, but there was also an interesting and not

[43] January 28, 1918.

[44] February 17, 1918.

unrelated piece of advice on the study of the Greek poets and philosophers as helps to the formation of "an underlying philosophy and a basis of judgment which will deepen your taste and centralize your knowledge of human nature. You have read so prodigiously in the modern field that you can well afford to take time for the ancient—I mean for more systematic study of the Greek authors than I assume you have yet made."[45] Sherman's answer takes up the two main charges and intimates that on the question of democracy he is now ready to adopt a definitely divergent course from Mr. More's.

(*To P. E. More*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 20, 1918.

My dear More:

It was a great pleasure to hear from you again. I had hoped to be able in replying to write you a few uninformed words about your *Platonism*, which I had ordered long ago. But in these days it seems to take about a month to get an express package from the seaboard to this point, and my copy has only just arrived. I have read only a chapter and a half, in which I remark that the style is of your gravest, with some occasional releases of your poetic ardor—always welcomed by me; and that your preliminary exposition is admirably adapted to lure the questing soul. When I have concluded the reading you may expect another letter.

Meanwhile I must express my gratitude for your measured strictures on my own poor performance with its damnable proof-reading and other more serious vices. I will answer only very briefly two of them. You ask how I reconcile my belief in "progress" with my notion that this at present is the worst of worlds. That seems very easy on my theory of temporary aberrations and retrogressions justifying, as I said, the martyrs in *standing fast.* The second question is more serious: to defend democracy. I shall have to write a book on that. Of course the thesis will be that democracy is anti-naturalistic, and, *possibly*, that aristocracy is essentially naturalistic.

[45] January 4, 1918.

Then it will be seen clearly that disciple and Master, as the Springfield *Republican* calls you, are drifting wide apart. I wonder if any one showed you the Springfield *Rep's* review of my book. It ran to a column and a half, of which about $\frac{1}{3}$ was devoted to giving you the devil as a Nietzschean grinder of the hearts of the poor. Then it went on to congratulate the disciple on his relative freedom from political doctrine. If you are slammed for the sins of your "disciple" as I am slammed for the sins of my "master," perhaps we'll have to discontinue this dedication business and stand alone to save ourselves from destruction! For your sake partly, I caught it also from the largest and vilest of the Chicago papers; but I think the animus that inspired the *Tribune's* drivel was excited mainly by my recent review of Mencken, who had been writing for them. That interesting paper, you may know, has the habit of retaining always one pro-German staff-writer to counterpoise the work in the adjoining column of the pro-English writer.

To return, however, to democracy. This last month I went through Carlyle's *Friedrich II*, and then back over the earlier things that lead up to it. This exercise tremendously braced my "democracy." I am now pretty well convinced that Carlyle's "*transcendentalism*" is hocus-pocus; and that the man is a remorseless "naturalist." His glorification of that atheistical Prussian beast and his filthy generals and his regimented subjects revolted me beyond measure. There is nothing in it but sheer nature-worship and celebration of physical force and ingenious administrative machinery. Then I turned up in "The Hero as Prophet" this gem of Scottish thought: "I care little about the sword: I will allow a thing to struggle for itself in this world, with any sword or tongue or implement it has, or can lay hold of. We will let it preach, and pamphleteer, and fight, and to the uttermost bestir itself, and do, *beak and claws, whatsoever is in it;* very sure that it will, in the long-run, conquer nothing which does not deserve to be conquered. What is better than itself, it cannot put away, but only what is worse. In this great duel, *Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong.*" Pure zoölogical "survival" theory; and this is Carlyle's "aristocracy."

At about the same time I read three other works: Mark Twain's *Letters*, the works of Shaftesbury, and Cicero's *De*

Finibus. Somewhere between Cicero and Carlyle, I think in the middle of the Eighteenth Century, men lost their grip on the distinction between "nature" of the Stoics and "nature" of the naturalists. Shaftesbury's "follow nature" and Carlyle's mean pretty nearly opposite things. The American democracy got conceived by the deists before the distinction was entirely lost—while there still remained some glimmerings of perception that following the nature of man meant resisting the nature of things. I went to Cicero to learn whether he was clear about the distinction, but I could not be sure that he was. All this leads up to the statement that I shall probably be reading your Greeks some time by day and night as you advise. Meanwhile I wish with Mark Twain that our civilization were in hell, where it deserves to be—"provided we can get anything better, which is doubtful."

Sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

In his next letter[46] Mr. More comments on the "medley of lies and blackguardism" in the reviews in which he is taken as a club to beat Sherman with or *vice versa*, with particular resentment against the writer in the London *Nation* who said something about a navvy's child dying for lack of proper food in order to enable Mr. More to read Pindar in comfort. "The insinuation in the words 'in order to,'" Mr. More rightly protested, "is nasty, and the whole thing is the sort of sentimental lying that gives one a disgust in general of the humanitarian movement." He was concerned to vindicate his own democracy, and urged Sherman once more to define his position more clearly:

"As for the connection between naturalism and democracy, perhaps that too, at least as it lies between us two, is largely a matter of definition. I am not so undemocratical as you may suppose, certainly not as the wolves of Chicago proclaim. But I do maintain that the kind of democracy represented by them is pure naturalism, just as the Nietzschean aristocracy of Mencken is pure naturalism. Why do they and a man like M. consort together so readily, when as 'democrats' and 'aristocrat' they ought to be at one another's throats? Evidently they come

[46]March 8, 1918.

together on the common ground of naturalism. So far as I have any quarrel with your position, it is because, so it seems to me, you show some inclination to take the word democracy as self-defined and blessed in itself. The gentlemen of the *Tribune* and the *Examiner*, honorable gentlemen all, ought to open your eyes to the fact that democracy is a thoroughly ambiguous word and, as assumed by one class of men, not blessed at all—or, rather, not open your eyes, for you are as fully aware of these distinctions as I am; but they might emphasize the need of defining your terms more sharply than you have yet done."

Sherman's long reply is taken up with his feelings about the reviewers, passing into a fierce tirade against the members of his own profession for withdrawing timidly from the scene of action and ending with a summons to Mr. More to divest himself of his decorous Platonic robe and gird himself to enter the dusty arena of democracy. Incidentally he sketches the line on which the democratic idea might be defended.

(*To P. E. More*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
March 12, 1918.

MY DEAR MORE:

I am glad that your clipping-bureau or my letter or whatever else stirred you up to reply to my latest, for I have lately had a growing sense of inhabiting a lodge in a vast wilderness with no company but—clergymen. I'm sure there is worse company than clergymen, but I'm really not up to them. I have had a steady drip of newspaper reviews with a few which have taken my book quite seriously and have thought there was something in it, and a great many which have danced and howled in happy derision, "Go up, bald head!" I begin to feel quite abashed before this "younger generation." I begin to feel that even my students with their mother's milk not yet dry on their lips have got the key to a wisdom of which I know nothing, and are smiling up at me in mild amusement and infinite superiority as I recite to them the old fairy tales on which my remote youth was nourished and on which my fantastic and phantasmal faith was founded. As if to confirm me in my superannuation and my easy

chair by the fire, these clergymen—Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, and Jesuits—write in to assure me that my ideas are exactly like theirs, that my book has the stuff for "many sermons,"—write in, by Hercules, to invite me to contribute to church papers. Is this what we must come to, if we turn away from the *Nation?*

So far as my personal feelings are concerned I don't suffer at all from the slings and arrows of the newspaper reviewers. But I can't help experiencing a certain sense of consternation at their (1) ignorance; (2) frivolity; (3) malice; (4) downright deliberate mendacity. I rather enjoy their malice because it indicates their wrath—it shows, as you say, that we have got under their skins. But the way they lie! There is one fellow on the Chicago *Tribune*, for example, who has been printing some studied jeer about once a week with a bit of mendacity for the sting in its tail—such, for instance, as the suggestion that my paper on A. France must be a plagiarism from Lemaître, of whom he apparently knew nothing till he read the essay and found a reference to him. If I had read Michaud's book, he says, I might have found something still better to steal from. And again I suspect that all he knows of Michaud he found in my own footnote directing the reader to him. And as for you and Pindar and the navvy's child, that bright bit of muck will no doubt be passed about from hand to hand by dozens of radical "critics" who have not so much as seen your title page. Furthermore, I begin to enquire whether there are any "critics" who are *not* radicals, as they call themselves. Where can one get a hearing, except in an occasional old-fashioned monthly, for anything but the radical point of view?

The cause of this condition is the ancient "pacifism" of the intellectual conservatives in this country. We have a deep-seated habit of saying

> "Let the long contention cease!
> Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
> Let them have it how they will!
> Thou art tired; best be still."

The worst offenders in this way are the men in my own profession. They stand for nothing in the country—absolutely

nothing. Inarticulate and apathetic parasites. Between you and me, nothing too sharp can be said of the public uselessness of the professor of English. (I rail thus, remembering your avowed pleasure in seeing the professors throw pots and kettles at one another.—But this was before you became a professor of Greek philosophy!) My quarrel with the professors is that they don't fight. They stand on their dignity—or rather they *sit* on it, till it is as flat as an old hat. They assent with civil leer and go out for a game of golf. They wash their hands of the whole matter, but they can't wash them clean. There are enough of them, if they would unite a little, to make an intellectual block of some weight for the street Arabs to collide with. But they don't unite. And any Arab that pleases comes up and tweaks the beard of them with wild applause from the street.

Perhaps there was a time when the most stunning retort to the Arabs was disdainful silence. I think that time is past. The Arabs are in possession of nearly all the instruments for making public opinion. The retort now that will move them is a sharpened sword. Lovers of decorum and decency cannot afford any longer to possess their souls in quietness, trusting that the world will come around to them. The world is not gravitating that way. If they continue to sit on their dignities they will soon be overtaken by the fate of all non-resistants in these days. They are tremendously outnumbered and may be defeated if they fight; but they will be annihilated if they don't fight; and I for one hope if they die they will die in their boots and not in their beds, though I am sure they would greatly prefer the downy death.

Well, there you are in Princeton teaching Platonism to the early Christians of Princeton in their Gothic retreats. I wish I were there, too, with leisure to read Plato as well as your book on Plato. I have been through it, but you know what that means when I add that I *haven't* been through Plato at the same time. In the beginning and at the end I felt that I was walking more or less in the light. The last chapter particularly of course moved me, for if I did not always know precisely what you were hitting *with* I did know what you were hitting *at*, and I heard the sound of the impact. When you speak forthright from your own experience and in your own figures, you speak like a living Plato, and you write better than any man in English; but

when you set yourself to discoursing on the Platonic labyrinth you write like one of us—I mean like a damned professor. I shall go on repeating this horrible taunt till I provoke you at last to the production of that philosophical autobiography which I have been demanding of you for years—one of the world's great books. You won't produce it till you have abandoned your humility, but humility is a vice which is going out nowadays. Your *Platonism* is a tremendously provocative book. It accomplishes its purpose, I suppose, in making one feel that if one only had time to get at the works of the old Greek in earnest, one would find salvation somewhere in the labyrinth. But it produces that effect only upon a few souls who have been taught on the old system that it is through much tribulation that we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Now Moses when he had his historical and epoch-making conversation with the Almighty did not go down and tell the Children of Israel that they too might have an epoch-making conversation with the Almighty if they would climb to the top of the mountain. He wrote the substance of it all out in simple everyday Jewish and brought it down to them and said, "Take it from *me!*" In the end you will have to resort to his method, if you want to pass for a Moses and not a Princeton professor.

I am very much struck by your comment on the affinity of the Mencken aristocrat and the Arabs. There is stuff for "many sermons" in that, and I meditate one by and by. Also I meditate a definition of democracy which will take the naturalistic curse off. I haven't polished it up for production yet, but its general shape glimmers in upon me something like this: Democracy is government by *divine revelation to the people of the "rights of man."* We begin with a sacred book of abstract principles and ideals, which we call our Constitution or what not. These principles summarize our "divine intuitions." They oppose the natural tendency of things. They will never be realized on this earth, for they constitute a divine plan, a picture of an ideal state—like the Beatitudes or the Decalogue. But they gradually produce a vague rearrangement of the huge chaos of nature into a shadowy mimicry or caricature of them—a kind of cave-man's dream of a democratic society. A couple of weeks ago when I was in Madison, Karl Young told me that there is a perfect society among the Benedictines on the Isle

of Wight, and he has set me to reading the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* with the help of which he hopes to found one in Madison. Perhaps you could found one in Princeton, but it wouldn't take in Chicago or in Urbana.

I'll have to get in another word about Carlyle, though I intended to stop on this page; so read on to the last. You found a very clever retort in that of Carlyle—"Hell fire will settle it." But it won't do. These metaphorical hells are the devil's own pitfalls for the philosopher. Don't let yourself be seduced by the attractions of a metaphorical hell. What Carlyle actually meant was: "*Gun-fire* will settle it! A whiff of grapeshot will settle it." In his later days the old scoundrel's identification of right with the might of gunpowder was complete. He had quite lost his faith in the "sacred books." He had no "divine revelation" to measure right or truth by. He was a confirmed pragmatist—in the popular sense of the word—the right man was the man who could "get away with it." I don't know what the correct sense of the word is, but my colleague Bode says that he and Dewey are the only ones who do know, and they won't or can't tell. Here is what we want:

NOT ENOUGH HELL PREACHED

He argued that "hell is not preached enough."

"We don't preach enough of it to the people," he said. "If you don't want to hear about hell, don't come around here.

"I don't believe in Gehenna or Hades. I believe in plain, old fashioned h-e-l-l, hell."

He defied all efforts to make him modify his method of work.

"If the preacher stands up to speak the truth," he said, "some God-forsaken old mountebank will object. But, take it from me, Bud, I want to tell you you've got no more business to run the church because you've got a little dough than that fellow who sits there that hasn't got a sou.

"Take your money and go to the devil with it. You can dictate to some preachers because you've got a little money, but you won't tell this preacher how to preach. You've put your eyeball on one you can't tell how to preach. It won't do you any good. Any time you don't like it you can beat it."[47]

Billy Sunday.

[47]Newspaper clipping.

Our best regards to you all, and mine in particular to Mrs. More—you gave me the reason for this special regard in your latest.

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

Why don't you get your friend Mr. Rockefeller to invest a little capital in a weekly periodical with a board of editors including all the capable professors who have been sidetracked into teaching school-girls and theologians—with salaries that will make them have a "realizing sense" of the true justification of capital in the economy of the world?—Or is this what Fuller is about? Are you going to join his staff? I wish you would tell me what you think of the new project.

S. P. S.

CHAPTER XVIII

AMERICA IN THE WAR

IN SEPTEMBER, 1917, after an absence of fifteen months Sherman returned to the university and fell again into the accustomed routine. What that routine was like appears from the description of a typical day in his journals.

Oct. 10, 1917.

Prepare George Moore lecture for to-morrow night. Write various letters. Prepare for Shakespeare lecture 2 P. M. Meet Shakespeare. 2–3 office hour; meet ——, discuss honor thesis. Go to tailor's. Library. Go for walk out Michigan Ave. After supper read H. E. W. essay on Jane Austen. Read D. N. B.'s articles on the two Sir Wm. Temples. Re-read J. S. Mill on Auguste Comte. Look through Frederic Harrison's *Religion of Common Sense*. Look through Brander Matthews' *The American of the Future*.

. . . . . .

This morning a letter from Professor J. M. Thomas of Minnesota asking me to give a paper about November 30 before Nat'l Council of Teachers of English on Anglo-Saxon Ideals and what teachers of literature can do to spread them. Take paper at once and outline a talk on the subject; and then telegraph acceptance.

. . . . . .

Also this evening after supper talked with —— —— for ¾ of an hour on proposed book on Lord Byron.

John has bad cough for 2 hours after supper.

It was a routine not yet vitally transformed by the official participation of America in the war. Except that some members of his staff had enlisted in the military training camps nothing had happened to disturb the settled ways of life. It was still in order to lecture on George Moore, to read essays

on Jane Austen, to discuss theses on Lord Byron or some remoter topic, and to project, in collaboration with Professor Pease, a volume of *Greek Literature for English Readers*. It was also in order to compose sprightly verses admonishing Professor Pease, who was as expert in botanical lore as in classical literature, against allowing his personality to be effaced by his scholarship. Having received from the latter a copy of his *Notes on the Botanical Exploration of the White Mountains*, he was provoked to this epistolary sally:

NOMINIS UMBRA

O Stanley P., in time not merit
Second to him whose pep and snap
Put darkest Africa on the map,
You've wove a garland; why not wear it?
(Along the high and snowy mountings
I cannot make my verses trot;
My rhyme and rhythm go to pot;
I gasp beside unflowing fountings.
While you, with sure foot of the chamois,
Ascend the old accustomed trail,
My wind and weaker spirits fail.)
But what I had to say was, "Dammee,
I've read your 'notes' with growing wonder
That one who will not let a flower
9000 feet up blush an hour
Unseen—I've said now why in thunder
Should one who from oblivion's babel
Has just emerged suffused with sweat,
Leaving old botanists buried yet,
But dragging their names in by the label,—
Why does this blundering blind historian
Up to the chin brimful of lore
Of roots and herbs and things galore
And tales that future scribes would glory in—
Why, cry I, does this violet do it—
In one blind footnote, names and dates,
Chuck twenty living years, algates
He might have writ *pars magna fuit?*

If he could find of some old puffer
Who clomb the hills in 1702
A journal copious and true
He'd print entire the ancient duffer—
His sunsets and his callouses
His scramblings and his noontide smoke,
How, where, and when he slept and woke,
What accidents befell his galluses.
But you, with modesty confounded,
Have sunk your lore in silence deep.
Lift up the lid, lest that it sleep
Till Gabriel's angry trump is sounded.

Whatever internal commotion the war created discharged itself in the composition and delivery of an address on "American and Allied Ideals." "Since I came to Urbana," he wrote to Carl Van Doren, "I have been working in order to persuade myself that I am useful to the community. . . . My pen runs on the war or the 'Teutonic Allies' most readily."[1]

A letter of about the same date to his mother conveys an impression of how far the mood of war mingled with the notes of everyday existence.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 10, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER:

On glancing at the calendar I see that it is already new year "and then some." It is only by looking at the calendar that one can detect this change, for Earth, as I "sang" in a poem a couple of years ago, Dec. 30th,

"Earth
With fresh blood in her ancient scars
Goes reeling in the old rut through the stars."

Still there is Mr. Wilson's new message with its hopeful and comprehensive designs for the reconstruction of the world.

[1]January 3, 1918.

The changes in the world-order there proposed would have made us all think five years ago that Wilson was stark mad. To-day they seem almost possible—almost within reach, requiring only a little more working on the popular imagination and a little more tilting up of the Hohenzollern thrones to be accomplishable.

But—to return from foreign to domestic matters, I'm afraid no one has written you from this household to thank you all for the handsome and huge Xmas packages. That neglect is like our family. I make acknowledgments for the Homer which is freighted with the literary associations of my childhood. I'm sorry the pencil lines have been erased; but I remember them and will put them on again—"Ten Grecian Cities," etc. Won't you kindly tell me also the next time you write *when* and where the bust first came into your hands. I should like to inscribe those points also on it; and try the effect of the incantation on John, who seems very susceptible to such influences. I am also greatly under John C.'s protection in the matter of these silk socks inscribed with his own embroidered signature which gives them a rich "association" value as the booksellers say; and also in the matter of the extremely handsome tie which I have worn since the day of its arrival. I haven't worn the socks and shall not till summer; for of course I want them displayed. I'm wearing nowadays two pairs of old ones—*at the same time*—one old silk on the inside and one old cotton on the outside—same as Major McCaskey, our commandant, except that his outside ones are wool. For the first time since I was a youth in Vermont, I have had this last month an attack of chilblains and decided that vigorous measures would have to be resorted to. We have had a winter so far of extraordinary low temperatures with great consumption of coal. . . . To return to the necktie, my stock as usual has been low—and cheap. Latterly I have had great trouble in making the ties slip under the collar on account of the resistive quality of rough cotton; so that the attempt to form a neat knot has ended in tearing the tie or in strangling the wearer. John's tie on the other hand is silk lined and slips around like a thief in the dark. . . . John was immensely pleased with the *Chatterbox* which he reads in voraciously. Also has Ruth told you how fond he is of his Testament? He reads his chapter nightly just before he goes to sleep,

and then tucks the Testament under his pillow. I think the boy has a real sense for sacred things, which will stay with him all his life. There are some other things to acknowledge, but I'll have to leave them to Ruth, and get ready for class.

I have just refused an invitation to go to Washington and write up the Red Cross, mainly because I don't consider myself competent for the criticism and inspection of such an organization. At the invitation of the Committee on Public Information I have sent in an address on "American and Allied Ideals"; but I doubt if they will find it exactly appropriate to their purposes.

I must put in one more word about Xmas. We "Hooved," as John would say, our Xmas tree and hung our stockings up over the fireplace. This was the first time we had done that, and I was glad to have John experience it, for my own keenest Xmas associations are connected with getting up in the dawn's first grey light and stealing down after the stocking. John enters into that sort of thing like a little Santa Claus himself.

Love to you both.

STUART.

The address on "American and Allied Ideals" was not just a piece of eloquent war propaganda. Like most Americans with an idealistic bent Sherman was convinced and carried away by President Wilson's statement of America's aims in the struggle. Like the vast majority of Americans, he was convinced that the realization of these aims was bound up with the victory of the Allies. Even though the historians should finally prove that he was mistaken in assigning a superior virtue to his own side in the contest, or though the sequel to the war should give the lie to all his hopes, the force of his statement would suffer little in consequence. For the burden of his appeal is in behalf of a world order which shall include all civilized societies, and calls for neither vengeance nor punishment of the vanquished. It is a clear rebuke to the jingoes, to old-fashioned nationalism, and to "self-regarding patriotism." If Sherman also urges the claims of a reasonable nationalism he is in complete accord with some very lucid thinkers whose study has convinced them that the preservation of national character is not inimical to international coöperation. The logic, and at times even the integrity,

of those who look upon America as a land where alien cultures may flourish side by side without injury to the unity of the body politic may legitimately be brought into question. It is not mere chauvinism to doubt the soundness of such a view. Sherman seized on a very important idea when he pointed out that every national culture develops a principle of expansion and a principle of contraction, and that those who settle in a foreign civilization tend to abandon their own contractive principle without embracing that of the new country. "The natural tendency of the cosmopolitan—the man who thinks he is assimilating all cultures—his natural tendency is to embrace the expansive principles of all nations and the contractive principles of none." The same process of analysis also led Sherman to an acute distinction between the German and American ideal, though it is a distinction which subsequently became a trifle dimmed. The ideal of the Germans he defined as "external control and 'inner freedom,' the Government looks after his conduct and he looks after his liberty. The ideal of the American is external freedom and inner control; the individual looks after his conduct and the Government looks after his liberty." But this argument is only incidental and preliminary to the formulation of an ideal on which all high-minded men and women might agree, and the universal character of which Sherman enforces by citing it from the mouth of Hebrew prophet, Chinese sage, Roman statesman, and even German poet.

His discussion throughout was on a plane of thinking and feeling at which he had no occasion to feel shame after the war. The address was originally delivered before the National Council of Teachers of English on December 1, 1917, and two weeks later was repeated at the University of Michigan. It then came to the notice of Dean G. S. Ford of Minnesota, who, after overcoming Sherman's skepticism as to its effectiveness with the general public, gave it enormous circulation through the Committee on Public Information. Its impression on many classes of readers was marked, and in the opinion of Professor Monro Smith it justified by itself the work of the committee which had published it.

The attitude of this address was the one which Sherman consistently maintained in all his writings relating to the war. On

the one hand he reprobated the German spirit, whether it thrust itself upon him through the Nietzschean morality of Mr. Mencken or the Prussian hero worship of Carlyle. On the other hand he rebuked the "militant imperialistic nationalism" which was embodied in the character and teaching of Theodore Roosevelt. Of course Mr. Mencken's friends cried out on Sherman's bigotry and "race prejudice," but his answer to one of them meets that challenge squarely enough.

"I do not care a tinker's damn about the racial or national 'blood' in the veins of the 'remote ancestry' of any honest American. All that interests me is the character of the ideas in his head at the present time. I detest and execrate the appeal to racial allegiance among Americans. I also detest and execrate a man who tries to drive a wedge of *contemporary German Kultur* into the heart of American life. What Mr. Mencken thinks or says of me is a matter of entire negligibility. What he publishes against American principles and ideals is of public interest and consequence."[2] For that matter, the friends of Carlyle also rose to protest, but severe as Sherman's indictment was, it has been not only upheld but immensely strengthened by Mr. Norwood Young's searching study of the career and writings of Carlyle.[3]

In the spring of 1918 Sherman was confined in bed for several weeks with a severe attack of quinsy and tonsillitis. The experience was not nearly as "funny" as he tried to make it seem after he emerged from it.

(*To H. N. Hillebrand*)

1016 Nevada St., Urbana, Illinois,
May 12, 1918.

DEAR HILLEBRAND:

The way our family went down and out two weeks ago looks from this point of view very funny. For the first few days when both heads of the house were down and no one remained to answer the door-bell or telephone, I told Mrs. Sherman, to cheer the family spirits, that we reproduced on the second floor

[2]Letter to Alfred Knopf, December 6, 1917.

[3]Sherman's article on "Carlyle and Kaiser-worship" evidently disturbed the American censorship. The issue of the *Nation* in which it appeared was for a time held up in the mails.

"The Workhouse Ward." After the middle of the first week she got up again; but I went on from tonsillitis to quinsy and an œdema (which is, the Dr. assures me, something rather choice and rare). For several days and nights I could neither sleep, nor eat, nor speak—not to speak of, and had to communicate with my nurse by aid of the written word. Now at the end of two weeks I am up again and expect to resume duties on Monday morning. My friends here got flowers enough together on two occasions to furnish out a pretty good funeral. It seems a pity they could not be used. Otherwise there has been no great loss. I apologize, however, to the Sunday breakfast guests, and will try to do better next time.

The illness was a sharp reminder of the unwisdom of his mode of life. He came out of it greatly weakened and looking ten years older than his age, and this was in a great measure owing to his reckless disregard of health. In the following fall he submitted to an operation on his tonsils, preparatory to which he made a will bequeathing his property to his wife, except for a thousand dollars to his son and trifling sums to his mother and sisters, and giving ten dollars for a ring to his brother John and to Homer Woodbridge his "Montaigne in French."

He saw now that he would have to pay some attention to physical exercise and began to allow time for walks into the country on Saturday afternoons. These, however, did not serve the purpose very well. Whether alone or with a companion, he kept restlessly turning over the ideas with which his latest reading had filled his mind and returned home as weary mentally as when he set out. He therefore had recourse to tennis, which gave him the complete relaxation that he needed and which he played with a zest and intensity that was characteristic of him whatever the game in which he took part. Once he joined in a baseball game between two faculty teams, and, entirely out of training as he was, made a headlong dive for home plate from which he was lucky to escape without permanent injury.

His illness put Sherman in arrears with his literary engagements, of which the most pressing was a Phi Beta Kappa poem which he was scheduled to read at Harvard during Commencement week. As was usual with him, he was nervously apprehensive of not meeting expectations, though Professor Palmer

assured him that he had been chosen because his style was allied to the refinement of poetry. As was usual, too, he acquitted himself with distinction when the time came. He took the war for his theme and put into the poem the distilled essence of his feelings and his hopes. Beginning in a key of subdued solemnity with a mournful undertone, he ascended with stately beat to where the emotion of the ode culminates with throbbing movement on a note of fervent consecration, and concluded with these stanzas:

"O watchers for the dawn,
Let us go down to the sea and wait
Till the dreary night is gone.

"How long? How long?

"Till soon or late
The House of Hate
Is shattered,
The Kings uncrowned, unflattered,
Like winds in winter scattered
Or words of wanton song.

"O watchmen of the night,
Let us go down to the sea and wait
With one accord
For the first slow fingers of the light,
Silent as men expecting great reward,
The end of ancient wrong,
A Risen Lord.

"How long? How long?

"Till soon or late,
She whom we watched for all the night
Out of the grey dawn slips,
Runs down the rejoicing sea,
With olives crowned, in garments white
Wind-blown and beautiful and bright—
The Wingèd Victory!
Speeding before the ships,
Her trumpet at her lips
To hail a world set free!"

Sherman also spoke at the luncheon that followed the formal meeting. After setting his hearers right as to the location of the university in which he taught (to Harvard all of Illinois is vaguely comprised in Chicago), he explained to them that the spirit of the Middle West was the same stimulating mixture of pessimism and hope which animated the rest of the country—"a feeling that our civilization has been a failure from the time of the cave man to the time of William II, combined with a feeling that when we get *him* out of the way of the sunlight, prospects will immensely brighten." While at Cambridge Sherman was the guest of Professor George Herbert Palmer, and it is clear from the correspondence which they maintained for some time after that guest and host were alike charmed with each other's society. Having fulfilled this responsibility Sherman hurried back West to give proper attention to his next task, which was the writing of another chapter for the *History of American Literature.*

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

R. F. D. No. 1, Box 64 B, Manistee, Michigan,
August 11, 1918.

DEAR CARL:

Ruth says I must take up my "rudeness" first. By this she refers to my *temporary* postponement of my reply to your invitation to visit you in West Cornwall in June. Of course I never intended to let it go unanswered. But like all pleasures I set it aside to cool while duties were being performed. The fact is, my dear boy, I went East on pins and needles because of my business engagements with the *C. H. of A. L.* I refused the most delightful invitations in Cambridge. I slighted and hurt my literary Aunt. I spent but 24 hrs. with my brother and sister. And I posted back here on wings to get at that voluble Mark Twain. Being considerably run down from one thing and another, I found it didn't flow from my pen with the alacrity I had hoped, but I stayed by, and thought of nothing else till the deed was done.—I should have delighted to see you and Margaret and Ann and the subtle mother of the twain; but was lashed like the wily Odysseus to my mast.

I seemed to detect a gentle gibe at the length of my article. But you know, my dear colleague, there is nothing sacred about my length. There are shears. There are pencils. There are fingers that can use them.—I got to doing the thing on a certain scale and stuck to it; but it can be reduced. You will note I hope that this is not an old article warmed over; but a quite new one done on the "literary history" idea rather than on the plan of serving up a critical bouquet. . . . I find that my old James article is nearly useless also from this point of view, and I'm attempting an entire refashion.—If you are at all concerned for the future of my nervous constitution you will drop me a line about the state of the "copy," and if you can relieve any strain you will. But you probably can't, and what's worse I suppose you wouldn't if you could, having suffered so much yourself from the accursed race of contributors that when an opportunity comes to inflict a little torture on a contributor with a conscience you can hardly resist temptation.

I really have a conscience!—though perhaps you think I don't show it.

But speaking of strains, I wish you had my department scurrying away through the summer into camps and colleges like a flock of quail! And were looking forward to the possibility that you would have 3500 students and have to teach them all yourself!

Thanks for your kind words about the verses. You should have seen me writing them all the way to the train while Ruth was weeping with the rheumatism and the dog was packing for Dunewood and the cat was wringing her hands. One of these days I will tell you about B. Wendell and the Pres. of the Board of Preachers who marched in the procession with me and all the other amenities of the occasion. I stayed with G. H. Palmer, who is a gentle angel and has the finest collection of first editions of English poetry since 1600, largely association copies, that you ever saw on a summer day. . . .

With the opening of the fall term the University of Illinois found itself mobilized as an integral part of the governmental machinery for the prosecution of the war. The students were turned into embryo soldiers and the faculty into drill masters who, if they could not teach military tactics and the manual of

arms, could bring the minds of the students into line with the one great purpose. Outwardly everything wore a martial air. The huge armory, which Sherman referred to as the only thing looking like a mountain between the Mississippi River and the Taconics, became the focus of university life. There students and instructors alike gathered daily for elementary maneuvers. A newly completed residence hall for women opposite Sherman's home had some months previously been turned into a barracks for the school of aviation, so that the family rose, ate, and retired to the sound of bugles. He had described to his audience in Harvard how "in the first twilight and infancy of the day, three hundred lusty young men just beneath our windows went in splendidly rhythmical chorus through the 'one, two, three, four, five, six' of their setting-up exercises, ending on the last exercise with a shout like the Θάλαττα of the Ten Thousand Greeks or that vocal burst which brought the walls of Jericho down." From this military atmosphere, now become much intenser, one could escape only for moments, as on a walk one Sunday (a "Tennysonian afternoon") through cornfields and winding lanes, with idyllic verses of Tennyson running in his head and a song of Henley's that his sister used to sing, but in the distance one could see a soldier walking with his lass and overhead a squadron of airplanes broke the peaceful reverie with the whir of eight propellers.

Intellectually the university also donned military uniform. The most important course was in War Issues, in which history, politics, economics, and literature were taught with a view to inculcating the moral superiority of the Allies. In view of these services President James felt justified in asking exemption from the draft for all the older members of his faculty, and Sherman with some regret fell into the plan. But his thoughts and energies were now as completely absorbed by the demands of the war as those of any man in a field training camp. He had an active part in organizing and managing the course in war aims. His staff being decimated by the ravages of influenza, his burden of teaching was increased. He served on committees to raise money and was called upon to attend meetings and make addresses in behalf of the cause. Absolutely every inch of margin was devoured by these labors, so that he had to revoke his promise to write the chapter on Henry James for the *Cambridge*

History. Though the Armistice came before this had been going on for two months, the military routine carried on to the end of the year.

On the first of December Sherman delivered an address in the University Auditorium, "In Thanksgiving for Victory." It was pitched in a religious key and closed with a prayer for good will between nations, reaching the highest point of his emotional exaltation over the war.

"The God of democratic peoples who has been the dwelling place of Americans in all generations has shown us what manner of thanksgiving is acceptable in his sight. In humility of spirit, recognizing that this dear land whereon we tread for a little is his, and the fulness thereof, to hold sacred the trust confided to us by our Fathers; to transmit the land they have left us to our children with all those blessings unimpaired for which we have loved it: liberty and equality before the law and fraternal coöperation made real against the threat of envenomed class struggle.

"To watch and pray that the purpose and action of the nation at home and abroad shall be held at the level of those who think most clearly, hope most highly, feel most generously, and embrace most magnanimously the cause of mankind. So that whenever the common sensual man touches the State, virtue may enter into him; so that whenever he passes from private to civic life he may and *must* rise into the atmosphere of splendid and disinterested ambitions, and feel himself sustained by the collective wisdom and valor of America.

"If this is to come to pass in this shattered and distracted world, then the nation must increasingly place her pride in her service to the cause of international government; must become increasingly quick and sensitive to her own national sins and purge herself of them; must like a consecrated priest guard the ark of the sacred covenants of honorable peoples; and by her own lofty example help to build and establish a temple of justice in the hearts of men and nations."

But very soon the "post-war mood" overtook Sherman and we find him revealing his mental state to Mr. More with a certain lassitude of spirit.

(*To P. E. More*)

1016 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 20, 1919.

MY DEAR MORE:

Do you remember this hand? We used to be acquainted, you may recall, before the war. In fact, though so much has rolled between, I can recall your latest letter. It was last spring that it came, (a fairly fat one—some eight pages—) and it was delivered to me in my bed, where I had spent three thoughtful weeks, days and nights *both* thoughtful, with acute tonsillitis and quinsy. I just managed to crawl out of that long enough to go to Cambridge and spend a good evening with Babbitt, who recommended Aristotle against your Plato; then I went to Michigan and vegetated through the summer, returned to Urbana and cast out the offending tonsils, registered for the draft, and threw myself into the task of teaching European history and propaganda along with English literature till a few weeks ago, when I lapsed again into a mere teacher of English without a thought or an occupation in the world.

I read with derision, a little before that, an article by Dewey called "The Post-War Mood." The next day I was in it—the mood—over the ears—escaped into Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (very fine, by the way), the etiquette of mediæval love, and the poems of John Donne as a change from newspapers. Then I read a review of my works by a man who said that I used the *style* of a cosmopolitan critic to deliver the "message of a Baptist minister." This gave me a terrible shock, reënforced by a testimonial from the united local clergy to a Thanksgiving sermon of mine; and I sat down to draw up a sketch of æsthetic theory, which, however, I abandoned shortly in favor of a lyric, beginning "I have been good too long, too long."

Pray, tell me what you have been doing so restful and recuperative. I wonder if you are not ready now to come out from the academic shades again, and put some of us middle-aged half-and-halfers to work. The field is clear as never before for a good literary paper. The *Nation*, *New Republic*, and *Dial*, I believe, are now sprinting side by side into a glori-

ous future, with the *Nation* a neck ahead; and those of us who were bred in your sedentary school belong already to the generation which has almost passed away. Can't we manage somehow to get up a little Indian summer or at least a watch-service for ourselves?

I was thinking of doing a little diatribe on E. L. Masters a month or so ago, when I suddenly read in the papers that he and I had been put into the Institute from this state. This promptly quieted me down, and I wrote to the Secretary that I thought my election would be gratifying to the clergy. I have looked into the by-laws, but haven't found anything yet as to the proper critical attitude towards one's colleagues. Still I suppose that Masters himself is a mellow classic now, and self-reverence must become the members. I shall be grateful to you for any suggestions as to decorum.

Feb. 2. I don't recall what stopped so abruptly the promising gallop started hereabove on the 20th of January. Perhaps it was the formation of a professorial branch of the American Federation of Labor, with the more or less avowed purpose of raising salaries to the point where they will permit the alternatives of butter with vegetable fats instead of straight margarine. Have you a branch in Princeton? or haven't your colleagues got to the point of admitting that they are common laborers?—Or perhaps it was the passage of the prohibition amendment. I seem to remember that your past strikes roots into St. Louis, and trust this does not mean that the substantial part of your revenues is invested in stocks doomed to wither and fade in the impending great drouth. Have you a trade or handicraft to fall back upon when the cock of the proletarian millennium crows thrice? Or will your daughters by that time have become economic units and capable of supporting you in the style to which you have been accustomed? For myself, I have a son who is already a chemist operating from breakfast to bedtime in the busy laboratory in our basement, and who, I think, will be able to take a position as investigator in some industrial establishment, when the new proletarian government plucks down and casts into the scrap-heap such idle and superfluous chairs as mine.

Meanwhile, one feels in this prolific world, where so many new chicks and lively broods are being hatched, very like, as

my father used to say, "last year's bird's nest"—from which I send you greetings and promise of a new tune when I learn one. Please give our best regards and kindest remembrances to all your household.

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

Did Mather kill his Boche? My brother sent me a German newspaper that he took from a Boche officer handled by him in the Medical Dep't. but that is the nearest I have come to the Argonne.

Early in March of this year Professor Babbitt was at the university again, lecturing on "Aspects of the Romantic Movement." "He is full of Buddhism," Sherman noted, "and the wisdom of Confucius this trip, which he uses as a romantic perfume to his classicism. He irritates but stimulates as usual." A few weeks later Sherman had his first experience in addressing the legislature at Springfield in behalf of the university appropriation, trying to impress upon the representatives of the people the value of literature and the humanities in a democracy.

The mood reflected in the last letter to Mr. More was not one to which Sherman was likely to yield himself for any length of time. One thing that he had enjoyed in the course in War Issues was the opportunity to teach the American tradition. The immediate disillusionment and loss of faith in all ideals that peace brought in its train threw him back with greater intensity upon the study of that tradition. His interest was further stimulated by the appearance of the *Education of Henry Adams*, and during the whole of 1919 his attention was taken up with reading and writing about the Adams family, Theodore Roosevelt, Walt Whitman, and Emerson, and, at closer range, by the very differing problems presented to a student of American ideals by Mr. Mencken and Mr. P. E. More. The most substantial part of the collection making up the volume of *Americans* was written within a year and a half of the signing of the Armistice.

American themes were not absorbing Sherman's attention exclusively. He was reverting to some of his earlier literary interests and, among other things, was playing seriously with a

proposal to write a one-volume history of English literature, which should interest the general reader as well as the college student. He was also besieged with demands for contributions from all sorts of reviews and magazines. He felt divided between the temptation of the serene academic study and the call to combat for living ideas. "I waver," he wrote to Van Doren, "between the delight of losing touch with the world in the pages of Giraldus Cambrensis and the Grettir Saga, and on the other hand wishing I were a muddy journalist cuffing and taking cuffs in the thick of the scuffle. It is needless to say that my official duties, though they keep me mad about 30% of the time, don't furnish the proper sort of *indignatio* to propel a real live journalist."[4] The *Weekly Review*, newly established under the editorship of Mr. Harold deWolf Fuller, the "Literary Supplement" of the *Evening Post*, the New York *Times* "Book Review," the *Bookman*, the *Yale Review* were among the publications that began to receive articles from his pen. The curious thing is that in spite of all these outlets he felt he no longer had a congenial medium for his ideas. The *Nation*, under Mr. Villard, seemed to him to have drifted from its moorings and to be absolutely lacking in "political sense, meaning knowledge of men and how they act to get anything done in a world mainly peopled by creatures with the ordinary characteristics of men."[5] Later he expressed his disquiet also at the literary developments: "Dreiser, Symons, Lewisohn—what next? Is Lewisohn going to take control? You are growing very 'impressionistic,' and one might say you are growing just a bit 'decadent.' Some of the stuff Lewisohn gets off would make fifty years of *Nation* editors squirm in their graves."[6] He found himself even less in sympathy with the conservative and timorous policy of the *Weekly Review*, and the other literary reviews did not stand for anything in particular that concerned him. He sent his essays on Roosevelt and the Adams family to the *Nation* chiefly because Carl Van Doren was its literary editor, but these were almost his last contributions to the weekly with which he had been so intimately connected for ten years.

[4]October 31, 1919.

[5]Letter to Carl Van Doren, October 30, 1918.

[6]*To the Same*, August 25, 1920.

Politics and literature blend in an interesting letter about this time to Bliss Perry.

(*To Bliss Perry*)

1116 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
October 26, 1919.

DEAR MR. PERRY:

You have said a good word for poetry and for progress. I enjoyed your almost too gentle reference to the exquisite gazelles who now wander on the "delicately imaginative plateaus" of American verse. Recently I have been reading the Heimskringla and the Grettir Saga; and it comes to mind that those grim old Norse humorists understood poetry in just about Courthope's sense. Take the last fight of Olaf at Stiklestad, where the king calls the scalds to go into the battle within the shield wall at his side—"and then ye will not have to follow the reports of others in what ye afterwards tell or sing concerning it." When you consider those old fellows in Iceland and then the fan-painters of our American "schools," don't you sometimes think you would like to edit one more poetry-magazine?

But it isn't necessary to go back to the Norse war-horses and their bards. There is Whitman within arm's length staggering under the burden of the "soul and conscience of man living in society," while most of his "followers" refuse to lend a hand, apparently thinking they sufficiently honor him if they keep their verse and their intellects dissolute.

Poetry will take the long view of the league, as you say, but that won't make much difference unless some of the poets take a longer view of poetry, and learn to make the hopes of liberals sing in the hearts of men and fly from mouth to mouth as "The White Man's Burden" did. The American liberals are generally poor fighters and poor singers. After a little brush with the enemy they retire to delicately imaginative plateaus. They experience a quick reaction against their political fury. Their leader collapses, and they all go out and buy a Roosevelt Memorial button. Have you bought yours?

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

The essay on "Roosevelt and the National Psychology" sums up with brilliancy and justice the diverse aspects of Roosevelt's character and influence. It sets forth without attempt at diminution the cleansing energy and the heightened sense of civic duty which that character supplied to American public life in a day when the country stood in sore need of such a stimulus, and then goes on to point out how Roosevelt's preaching of a militant imperialistic nationalism runs counter to the needs of the new day and to the aspirations of the "simple-hearted, idealistic, plain people" whose cause he had originally espoused against the privileged classes. Nothing that Sherman ever wrote received as much applause as this analysis. Historians like Professor W. E. Dodd and Mr. Worthington C. Ford praised it for its faithfulness, its balance, its insight and its temperateness. Professor Bliss Perry was so pleased with it that he read it three times. He also reported that a certain Harvard alumnus, in his zeal for the article, had taken it to President Lowell and insisted that "men like Sherman are needed in the English department at Harvard."[7] But the most significant tribute, the seal, as it were, of Sherman's success, came from his arch-antagonist in the *Smart Set*, who called it "the one intelligent monograph I have so far encountered" with "some positive ideas that are likely to be heard of in the Roosevelt criticism of the future, once the dusting of perfumed talcum powder and squirting of violet water ceases." It should be noted that when someone sent him the article containing this compliment, Sherman did not repel it, but observed that "there are certain good elements of honesty and of thought in Mencken which distinguish him, for all his brutality of manner."[8]

Sherman had Roosevelt in his mind when, a few weeks later in a Thanksgiving Address, he defined to the university audience what he considered the function of the privileged class to be in a democracy. Voicing the disquiet of thoughtful people at the reappearance of pleasure-seeking, luxury, private and public timorousness and apathy, he proclaimed a remedy for these evils in strenuous activity, and the duty of the privileged to lead the rest in labor. His words became instinct with

[7]Letter to Sherman, November 28, 1919.

[8]Letter to S. Raphaelson, April 7, 1920.

life and power as he preached that lesson of responsible toil of which his whole life was a faithful expression:

"The men whom we honor, the men whom we aspire to emulate, have toiled terribly, and have reckoned not labor but interruption of labor, and inactivity, and superannuation as the intolerable and dreadful prospects. Why, they would say, ask for a six-hour day, or an eight-hour day? What every man in our class who is worth his salt sighs for, is a day of twenty-four hours! Why ask for a five day week when every man in the privileged class thinks six days too little, and almost grudges at the Lord God who, being almighty, yet rested the seventh day, to encourage the others. For this we envy the late Theodore Roosevelt, that he was capable of more work than any other man of his time; for this we honor him, that he felt and proclaimed the joy of it; and for this we wonder at him, that like a powerful locomotive, from the time the first fire of his purpose was kindled, and the engine began to steam, and the driving-rod to revolve, he thundered on into eternity at full speed—without stop! . . .

"It is the function of the privileged class to dissipate the popular illusion that the chief good of life is pleasure, and to make manifest by their works that the chief good is rather to execute ideas, the greatest that they can conceive. It is their function to bear the costs and celebrate the pain of progress, which is effort, the pain of high choices, which is relinquishment, the pain of a long allegiance, which is fatigue, the pain of upholding the law, which is obedience, the pain of experimentation, which is solitude, and peril, and misapprehension, and voyaging through uncharted seas alone."

This virtually was Sherman's personal religion, and the qualities of self-control and radical adventure are as important elements in it as are labor and devotion. He believed these qualities to be inherent in the best traditions of American life, and so he felt justified in making his appeal in the name of "the religion of America" or "the religion of democracy," whose aim it was "to bring the whole body of humanity into a harmonious and satisfactory life and fruitful relationships."

The essay on "Mencken and the Jeune Fille," which appeared in the New York *Times* "Book Review" of December 7th, gave Sherman another opportunity to state his democratic

convictions. An allusion in it to Mencken as a "Nietzschean aristocrat" met the eyes of Mr. William M. Salter, who felt that it implied a rather too "conventional" view of Nietzsche on Sherman's part and wrote to him in remonstrance. In two interesting letters Sherman explained fully his attitude toward the German philosopher.

(*To W. M. Salter*)

1116[9] Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
December 11, 1919.

My dear Mr. Salter:

Your allusion to our common Iowa birthplace, where Mencken's friend waits "the second coming of his redeemer," indicates to me that we have both suffered alike from the Baltimore Arab's rough-handed treatment of matters which we regard with a certain tenderness; and this makes your very kind letter doubly welcome.

I have read Nietzsche more or less for a dozen or fifteen years and have a dozen of his works on my shelves; but in literature *on* Nietzsche as it happens I have read very little—almost nothing. Your book has caught my eye from time to time, and I have intended to read it. I shall do so this Christmas recess, whether you send me a copy or no; for what you say of him excites my curiosity.

Every now and then I come upon an article by some German or German-American critic who assures me that Nietzsche really was nothing like what American and English readers imagine he was, but a quite pure and beautiful and beneficent soul. Whenever I am stimulated by such an article I read some more *Nietzsche;* but I have never been able to take their view as wholly sound. The man was a genius and a very eloquent one, and a few drops of him is a good tonic, perhaps, for many people.

But, on the other hand, there are many Nietzscheans in this country and abroad. His influence is very widely discernible in English, French, German criticism and in recent Russian fiction, and I discover it every now and then among my own

[9]There was a revision in the numbering of the houses in Urbana by which Sherman's address was changed from 1016 to 1116.

students. And in nearly every case this influence has impressed me as, let us say, baleful. I mean it seems to develop an ugly form of cynicism, an ugly hardness, an ugly coarseness of mind, a repellent streak of selfishness, an antipathy to every tendency and trait in human nature which I have learned to prize. Do all these Nietzscheans misunderstand Nietzsche? But if so, the saying is not fulfilled that by their fruits ye shall know them.

However, I have not intended to convey the idea that I regard Mencken as the authority on Nietzsche. I regard him only as a rather typical Nietzschean, both in his book on Nietzsche and in his miscellaneous critical writings. Whatever is wholesome in Nietzsche, therefore, and especially whatever is fine, he is bound to miss or distort or render crude. When I refer to him as a Nietzschean "aristocrat," I intend to convey at least a shade of irony; but whether Nietzsche himself was in his saner years entitled to bear the title of aristocrat in the better sense—that is a question on which I am still open to conviction, though I'll have to admit that the man's own writing has fixed in my mind pretty deeply a distinctly unfavorable prejudice. If his central impulse is sound, his influence ought not to be so uniformly sinister as in my observation it is.

With best regards,
Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

(*To The Same*)

1116 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
January 4, 1920.

DEAR MR. SALTER:

Your book came and I read it straight through in two or three sittings, which does not mean that I shall not take your advice and read it for a year or so. I need not tell you that it is an extraordinarily good book! I have no doubt it is the best thing in English, because I do not see how a book of its kind could be better. First of all, its method is admirable. It really digests Nietzsche and reproduces him, condensed with all his flavor in him. Second, you are steadily not merely readable but good reading; and yet you fortify your text like an edition of

Sophocles, which makes you an indispensable reference book. Third, you are obviously pretty sympathetic with your subject; and you are even more obviously anxious to see all there is of him, and to tell the whole truth about him.

I can't say that you have changed my judgment of him materially; but I am almost surprised to find that you have presented a summary of all the chief points on which my adverse judgment is based; so it is clear that you, too, have taken them into consideration in coming to your own much more favorable conclusions.

I am entirely in agreement with you, however, as to Nietzsche's importance. He is clearly a great and pregnant writer. He gathers his age up into himself somewhat as Rousseau does his. We shall be obliged to define our own positions with reference to him. We cannot overlook him or pass him by. We must accept him or resist him; and, even while we are resisting, we shall undoubtedly acquire some of his habits of thought and some of his munitions of war. He is an enemy that teaches the foe the art of war.

But if you admit all this about his importance, I do not understand quite how you can have failed, as you say you have failed, to meet the "Nietzscheans." You may easily have failed to find many or any who understand the man as well as you do. His followers may all impress you as ignorant and lop-sided Nietzscheans. But then the followers of Christ impress most of us as ignorant and lop-sided Christians. And still we don't say that we are unacquainted with any Xians—except in our sarcastic moments.

Paul More, whose book on Nietzsche I believe you do not care much for, once remarked to me that he felt a great deal of compassion for the man. I think More might have gone on and said that he feels a great deal in common with Nietzsche in the aristocratic tendency of his thought. I myself feel as much compassion as I decently can for a great writer; but I find extremely little in common with Nietzsche in his fundamental emotions regarding the relation of the "great man" to his fellows. I find myself possessed of far greater faith in the virtues and capacities of the "herd" than he avowed, and far greater admiration for the achievements of the average man. I find his conception of the place of the majority in the

social scheme revolting and absurd; and since most of his other ideas are dependent upon that conception, you may readily see what a poor subject I am. In some modern positive critical fashion, I believe we must work out here the ideas of Christianity and democracy to which Nietzsche's practical influence is about as hostile as any force yet released in the world. But since I believe with all my heart in studying the enemy, I shall study Nietzsche for a long time to come, with entire readiness to learn all that he has to teach me.

I am greatly obliged to you for calling my attention to the new book. I shall get hold of it and send you a note, when I have read it. It is a great privilege and pleasure to hear of things that one ought to read; your advice up to date has been so good that I can't hesitate to give you a second trial.

Very sincerely yours,
STUART P. SHERMAN.

Where have you written on Henry Adams? I think I saw an allusion the other day to an article of yours.

While on the one hand Sherman was defending the idea of democracy against the onslaughts of the Menckens and the Nietzsches, on the other hand he was trying to combat what he thought the cold indifference to the average man of Mr. More, imputing the latter's low estimate of ordinary humanity to a deliberate lack of acquaintance with it and to an excessive reliance on Swift's libels. If, he explained, he had enjoyed opportunities of knowing him, "he would have discovered in the average man,—along with healthy self-interest, petty vices, and envy enough to keep him stirring,—courage, fortitude, sobriety, kindness, honesty, and sound practical intelligence. If he could have pressed critically into the matter, he would have discovered something even more surprising. He would have learned that the average man is, like himself, at heart a mystic, vaguely hungering for a peace that diplomats cannot give, obscurely seeking the permanent amid the transitory; a poor swimmer struggling for a rock amid the flux of waters, a lonely pilgrim longing for the shadow of a mighty rock in a weary land. And if 'P. E. M.' had a bit more of that natural sympathy of which he is so distrustful, he would have

perceived that what more than anything else to-day keeps the average man from lapsing into Yahooism is the *religion of democracy*, consisting of a little bundle of general principles which make him respect himself and his neighbor; a bundle of principles kindled in crucial times by an intense emotion, in which his self-interest, his petty vices, and his envy are consumed as with fire; and he sees the common weal as the mighty rock in the shadow of which his little life and personality are to be surrendered, if need be, as things negligible and transitory.

"I am speaking of the average man and traits of his which I can never contemplate, being one myself, without a lift of the heart; and I frankly avow that it vexes me to hear this emotion which does so much to keep us average men from weariness, and from the devastating cynicism of the wits, and the horrid ennuis of the great, and from their sense that the affairs of men are really of small consequence—it vexes me to hear this emotion dismissed as fatuous democratic self-complacency."[10]

Mr. More did not admit the truth of all these charges, but maintained his central position firmly, and earnestly labored to win Sherman over to it. "I am not," he said, "quite so stubborn a Tory in theory as you suspect, and I rather fancy that in practice I can meet your carpenters and teamsters with as little condescension and with as much sympathetic understanding as you can. As a matter of fact the intellectual Tory is ordinarily better fitted for such intercourse than the academic Liberal. Nor have I quite so gloomy a view of human nature in general as you like to believe. I like the consistency of Swift, I can't say I approve of his misanthropy. On the other hand I am affected by a sort of moral nausea when the sentimentalist begins to pour rose water into the sewer. What I least like in democracy is its undoubted tendency to shirk the truth. All the heroisms are in man, *est deus in nobis;* there is something admirable, noble if you wish, in the sturdy life of many an ordinary worker. See the good, yes; but in God's name don't deny the evil, don't get slushy. Human nature is of a strange mixture, and the one thing it cannot stand is too much flattery. Whatever other sins we may uproot, we shall never get rid of

[10] *Americans*, pp. 335-336.

vanity, οἴησις, κενοδοξία; and the sure way to turn democracy from a blessing to a curse is to puff it up with conceit and call it heroic and curse those who criticize it. I do not like to see a man of your ability and insight, deliberately taking up the job of whitewasher; and you'll never carry it off without bartering your soul for popularity, as you may judge from the way the young wits of Chicago love you. There's a Roland for your Oliver!"[11]

He returns to the theme shortly after:

"Your quotations from *Hamlet* express my own attitude towards human nature perfectly; I think I see the god in man, and the beast too. As you say, any one who regards man as consistently good or as consistently evil is a fanatic. What rather impresses me in your dear average man is what impressed Sainte-Beuve, not his baseness or vileness so much as that which makes him average, his curious dullness and flatness of soul. The divine spark is in him, but there is some fatal flaccidity in him. So I have come to regard ῥαθυμία 'effeminate slackness,' to use Milton's phrase, as the last source and fountain head of evil. I do not believe flattery is the means to arouse him. I observe that the democratic glorification of the average man is working with deadly certainty to lower his average in things intellectual—not perhaps so immediately in things moral. You speak of the winsomeness of Sainte-Beuve's critical method; do you not know that Sainte-Beuve in America to-day, in the first place could not find any newspaper to print his essays, and in the second place would have had but a scant audience if they were printed? You know this too well, and you know how literary taste is waning and waning in our good democracy. Now I do not say that the remedy is to reject democracy, but I do say, and you know I am saying the truth, that democracy has got to be cured of its effeminate craving for flattery. But not to flatter does not mean to malign. If a writer, whether P. E. M. or another, is malignant, he is wrong. But it does mean to stand stiffly for one's standards, and it does mean also, if I may speak without offence, that he should avoid the cant of calling himself 'one of the mob.'"[12]

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[11]January 25, 1920.

[12]February 8, 1920.

Sherman's personal letters at the end of 1919 show him in a mood of inner tranquillity.

(*To Mrs. Ada P. Sherman*)

1016 Nevada St., Urbana, Illinois,
December 1, 1919.

DEAR MOTHER:

. . . I infer that Ruth has written you most of our news about the little addition we are putting on the rear of the house. The weather hasn't been very favorable and the builders haven't been very prompt. Up to date only three days' full work have been put in. The cellar is excavated and the cellar wall half built. That is all yet. And of course we are expecting the Nick's own time inside when the carpenters begin to hammer and all our internal parts are torn up and bedlam rules. However we are very thankful for the time being that we have a roof overhead and a furnace underneath. For the town is very crowded this year and rents have soared to the moon. Also building is almost prohibitive; and we should not be undertaking this small increase but for a sense that we've had for a long time that we owed it, more or less officially, to the community and the department, which alone numbers fifty-six members, to have a room in which we could receive at least a fraction of them at a time.

Ruth wrote you about my Thanksgiving speech. There was an audience or congregation of a thousand to twelve hundred. I haven't any copy of my speech but I send some extracts badly printed by the local paper. . . .

The sweater that you sent me is a delightful garment. On chilly days I wear it in the house, and its lack of sleeves makes it an entirely comfortable thing to work in. . . .

We are all well now and getting on very nicely together. John pleases me more every day; though of course that is not to say that he would please anyone else particularly. But he is growing big and intelligent and I think, with providence willing, he will be a fine man; and a man of energy and ability far greater than his father had; and I don't know anything that could please a father more than that. Ruth is very good

to us both:—by "good" of course the selfish male means indulgent and affectionate. And besides that she takes hold of community activities and plays her part in a way that makes one proud of her. I'm still running on, you see, about ourself; but it's a fine sunny Sunday morning and perhaps I feel a little thankful for personal blessings not mentioned in the austerely Puritan discourse which I enclose.

Love to you and all,
Affectionately,
STUART.

(*To The Same*)

1116 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
December 24, 1919.

DEAR MOTHER:

Your package came the other day, and I opened it in part—far enough to see the socks. They are gorgeous! I sat down alone in my study and put them on, and have worn them ever since—except in bed! In my old age, my blood seems to be cooling down or I am growing as luxurious as a lamb; for I seem to like to live encased in wool. I have worn your wonderful sweater a good deal even in the house. Nowadays there are holes in the roof from time to time while the shingling goes on, and our hot-air heater doesn't keep us very steadily warm in the sharper weather. However, we are glad to put up with some temporary inconvenience for the prospect of elbow room by and by.

I dipped into your package for Ruth, too, and thought it was fine; but hid it behind the book against to-night; and John's I didn't open for there was a no-trespassing seal on it.

I wish you all a very merry Xmas and a happy new year and love to you, dear mother.

STUART.

(*To Carl Van Doren*)

1116 Nevada Street, Urbana, Illinois,
December 28, 1919.

DEAR CARL:

We all wish the Van Doren family a very happy New Year, having arrived a bit too late to look properly after their Xmas.

We received their card, which was a pleasure, since unmistakably theirs. I made out an article, a good one, on the Silver Age in Literature some time ago as yours, and relished it for that. Subsequently, I have been trying in vain to detect Irita's subtle style among the leaders. I am sure that I perceive its influence in other ways—a sort of effluence of sweet reasonableness diffusing itself gradually through the paper.

But, really, Irita, haven't you anything to do at home? Is the whole family

> "bit with rage canine of growing rich
> Fiend's laughter and the loudest laugh in Hell?"
>
> E. YOUNG.

Let us have one good old fashioned family left in the City. Let the effluence diffuse itself from the home. Let it pervade the heart of the Editor.

> "In woman nothing lovelier can be found
> Than to study household good . . .
> And good works in her husband to promote."
>
> MILTON.

These two quotations have something wrong in the words but nothing in the sense.

I've received the Mass. Soc. Pub. and the Adams book and added them to my Adams collection, and have started the incubation process.

I've just finished a familiar essay on "P. E. M." and am now wondering whether I'll find a publisher for it between the *Times* and the *Review*. This free-lance business upon which I have been cast by the editors is uneasy. There was a time when I would post an article as lightly as a letter, secure in the sense that it would reach a friendly recipient. Now I think I must be considered an unsafe man all the way around. But this is a confidential sigh.

Ruth is busy these days with building an addition to the north side of the house, in the ground story of which is a fireplace with a somewhat larger study adjoining. I hope you will stretch your legs toward a good fire there along about Easter, and that Irita and Ruth will be purring hard by.

The sound of five hammers around, above, and below makes distracting music by day; but working-men quit early in these times; and the nights are fine.—I haven't seen a living soul this vacation; have not gone rabbit hunting (except in the basement where we found eleven one morning); have done nothing but sit and write and read. It begins to feel solitudinous. Therefore, dip that pen in the well and effuse a bit to-night.

Best love to you all,
S. P. S.

END OF VOLUME I

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